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ADDRESSING ROMAN JEWS: PAUL'S VIEW ON THE LAW IN THE
LETTER TO THE ROMANS

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology Joint
PhD Program

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Dennis C. Haugh

June 2013

Advisor: Professor Pamela Eisenbaum

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Title: ADDRESSING ROMAN JEWS: PAUL'S VIEW ON THE LAW IN THE
LETTER TO THE ROMANS
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ABSTRACT

For many years, Pauline scholars have wrestled with two related questions: (1) how did Paul envision the composition of the audience for his letter to Rome? (2) What did Paul see as the role of the Law in the community of Jesus followers? As to the first question, I contend that Paul wrote to an implied audience composed of non-Judeans who had first converted to Judaism and then acknowledge Jesus as Messiah, or who became Jews at the time of their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. In either case, they adopted the beliefs and practices of the followers of Jesus within the practices of Judaism. I refer to this audience as non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. I support the historical plausibility of this reconstruction of the audience through a review of the history of the Judeans in Rome including the development of the community of Jesus followers in that city. My reconstruction of the audience is demonstrated through my reading of Paul's rhetoric in Rom and his emphasis throughout the letter on establishing himself as a member of the Jewish in-group.

Paul's position on the Law follows from that audience and the purpose for Paul's writing to Rome. With many others, I read Rom as a letter seeking assistance from Roman Jesus followers for future missionary activities (his collection for the community in Jerusalem and/or his establishment of a missionary presence in Spain). As a petitioner, Paul wrote a conciliatory letter. Writing to an audience of Jewish Jesus followers, Paul

carefully sets out his understanding of the relationship among all Jews (Jesus followers or no), his congregations in the East (composed of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers), and the Law. Paul reiterates in Rom that the provisions of the Sinai covenant distinctive to Jews do not apply to non-Jews. It is through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, as foretold in Scriptures, which themselves constitute part of the Law, that non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers are brought into the family of Abraham and into righteous relations with the God of Israel. The Law therefore remains in force for all Jesus followers.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library.
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
ACT	Ancient Christian Texts
ActaRom-4°	Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae, Series in 4°
AGJU	Arbeiten zur geschichte des antiken Judentums and des Urchristentums
AJBS	<i>African Journal of Biblical Studies</i>
AJS	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ASMA	Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity
ASR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
BaltStudies	Baltimore Studies in the History of Judaism
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000.
BDF	Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BI	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAHS	Clarendon Ancient History Series
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CPJ	Corpus papyrorum judaicorum. Edited by V. Tcherikover 3 vols. Cambridge, 1957-1964.
CRBR	<i>Critical Review of Books in Religion</i>
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
CTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTQ	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
Curios.	Plutarch, <i>De curiositate</i> Trans. W. C. Helmbold. vol. 6 of 16. LCL; Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1970.
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
Diss.	Epictetus, <i>The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments</i> . 2 vols. Trans. W. A. Oldfeather. LCL. London and New York: William Heinemann and G. P. Putnam, 1978.
DRLAR	Divinations: Readings in Late Antique Religion
EJSP	<i>European Journal of Social Psychology</i>
Ep.	Seneca, <i>Epistulae Morales</i> 3 vols. LCL. Trans. R. M. Gummere. LCL. London and New York: William Heinemann and G. P. Putnam, 1979.
ES CJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et la judaïsme
ESCO	European Studies on Christian Origin
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church. Washington D.C.
FRC	The Family, Religion, and Culture
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IBS	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
ISSP	<i>International Series in Social Psychology</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITQ	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCP	Jewish and Christian Perspectives
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JRT	<i>Journal of Religious Thought</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>

JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSPL	<i>Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters</i>
JSSR	<i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i>
JTI	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Jud	<i>Judaica</i>
KD	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
L.A.E.	<i>Life of Adam and Eve</i> . Trans. M. D. Johnson in <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , vol. 2. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
L&N	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. 2d ed. New York, 1989.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
LQ	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
MdB	<i>Le Monde de la Bible</i>
MSJ	<i>Masters Seminary Journal</i>
MTSR	<i>Method and Theory in the Study of Religion</i>
NA ²⁷	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland 27 th ed.
NAB	New American Bible
Nat d.	Cicero, Marcus Tullius. <i>De Natura Deorum</i> . Translated by H. Rackham. XXVIII vols. Vol. XIX. LCL. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1933.
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRTh	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NT	New Testament
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTSI	The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel
OAD	<i>Oxford American Dictionary</i> . Ed. Eugene Ehrlich, Stuart Berg Flexner, Gorton Carruth, and Joyce M. Hawkins. (New York: Avon, 1980).
ÖBS	<i>Österreichische biblische Studien</i>

OT	Old Testament
PaP	Past and Present Series
PIBA	Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	Juvenal, <i>Satires</i> . Translated by G. G. Ramsay. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBM	Stuttgarter biblische Monographien
SCJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism
STB	Studies in Biblical Theology
StBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTSU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
<i>SocRel</i>	<i>Sociology of Religion</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>SPhilo</i>	<i>Studio Philonica</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
StBLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
Stern	Stern, Menahem, ed. <i>Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism</i> . 3 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974—1984.
<i>STRev</i>	<i>Sewanee Theological Review</i>
SUNY Jud.	State University of New York Series in Judaica: Hermeneutics, Mysticism, and Religion
TB	Theologische Bücherei
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976.
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1974-
TEh	Theologische Existenz heute
ThSt	Theologische Studien

<i>TLNT</i>	Spicq, Celas. <i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament</i> . Translated by James D. Ernst. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
<i>TorJT</i>	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TSAJ</i>	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TTKi</i>	<i>Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke</i>
<i>TTZ</i>	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>Vita beat.</i>	Seneca the Younger. <i>Moral Essays</i> . vol 2 of 3 vols. Trans. John W. Basore. LCL. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1979.
<i>WASA</i>	<i>WASA [What Are They Saying About . ..]</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WD</i>	<i>Wort und Dienst</i>
<i>WGRWSupS</i>	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

CHAPTER ONE: WHY THE WORLD NEEDS ONE MORE WORK ON ROMANS

The Project in Miniature

A persistent question in scholarship concerning Paul's letters, and particularly his Letter to the Romans, has been Paul's view of the Law, that constellation of texts and practices that directed the life of Jews.¹ For instance, in Gal, Paul demands that the male members of his audience avoid circumcision, a most distinctive mark of Jews in antiquity and enjoined on all Jews from the time of Abraham. In Rom, on the other hand, Paul claims that "circumcision has value if you obey the Law" (2:25), and "we are supporting the Law" (3:31b). Is his protestation of support for the Law – "Then do we nullify the Law because of faithfulness? Of course not! Rather we are establishing it" (Rom 3:31) – simply empty rhetoric or does Paul truly believe that his work supports the Law?²

Resolving these and other seeming contradictions has engaged scholars for generations. Heikki Räisänen summarized four ways scholars have attempted to resolve these contradictions: (1) Paul's message was so difficult that only in contradictions could

¹ This definition emphasizes the relationship of Jews to the Law, a common scholarly emphasis. Heikki Räisänen, for instance, defines the Law as "the authoritative tradition of Israel, anchored in the revelation on Sinai, which separates the Jews from the rest of mankind." Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 16. As I will develop in ch. 4, Paul believed that the Law also held provision for other nations.

² Unless otherwise marked, all translations of ancient works are my own.

it be conveyed; (2) contradictory parts are interpolations by others into the letters; (3) the contradictions really represent developments in Paul's thinking; and (4) these contradictions and tensions are simply the nature of Paul's own theology about the Law.³

The contention of this work is that these contradictions and tensions can be eased with resolution of another perennial question: the identity of the audience to Rom. As Stanley Stowers has written, "I am convinced that the way one construes audience and author in the rhetoric of the letter is the decisive factor in determining the reading one will give to the letter."⁴ So far, most arguments about Paul's intended audience revolve around whether it was composed of "Gentile Christians" or "Jewish Christians" or a mixture of both. When these categories are used, one born in Judea, or identifying with ancestors from Judea, is automatically assumed to be a Jew, one who follows the precepts of the Law. In a similar way, one born in Spain is assumed to be a follower of the traditional religion of that region, regardless of subsequent developments. How, then, should we refer to Spanish converts to the religion of Israel? Jews? What if they subsequently became "Christians:" are they then "Gentile Christians" or "Jewish Christians"? What has happened to their Spanish genealogy, language, and customs? How would Paul have referred to them?

My work is an effort to add precision to the identification of Paul's implied audience, and to demonstrate how the identification of a particular audience illuminates

³ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 5-11.

⁴ Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 16.

the interpretation of Paul's treatment of the Law. The contention on which this work builds is that in Rom, Paul was intending to write to an audience of Jews, an ethnoreligious category (people for whom the Law was still a prominent feature in their lives), who were non-Judeans, an ethnogeographic category (tracing their origin to lands other than 1st century Palestine), who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

A careful reading of Paul's letters shows that it is essential to move beyond the categories of "Gentile Christian" and "Jewish Christian" to describe Paul's audiences. I will demonstrate that recognizing both differing audiences and differing provisions of the Law for Jews and non-Jews helps resolve some of the tensions concerning Paul and the Law.

From my work I have concluded that Paul wrote Rom to an implied audience composed of non-Judean, Jewish, Jesus followers, seeking their assistance for his trip(s) to Jerusalem and/or Spain. Fearing opposition to his gospel, Paul explained how his teaching flowed from the Jewish Scriptures and, in particular, how the Law applied both to non-Jews and to Jews. Rather than nullifying the Law, therefore, Paul in Romans upheld it, just as he maintained.

For reasons I go into at some length below, I refer throughout this work to the implied audience of Rom as non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. When I refer to non-Judeans, I refer to those having no genealogical ties to the land of Palestine. Paul and others like him in the first century Diaspora may have never lived in Palestine but nevertheless honor this tie. By Jew, I mean one taking as authoritative the scriptures of Judaism, including the provisions of the Law specific to the descendants of Jacob/Israel,

with ties to the temple in Jerusalem, and, most importantly, identifying with the then worldwide community of Jews.⁵ And by Jesus followers I mean one recognizing the risen Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Anointed One.

Plan for the Book

Before directly engaging my argument, I wish to stake out in this chapter three assumptions. These assumptions are to my argument as the cleared land on which to build a tower: the precise text of Romans that I will use, the nature and purpose of the terminology that I will employ, and my understanding of why Paul wrote the letter in the first place. Following this, I summarize how my construction of the audience is situated within current scholarship on Rom.

The majority of this dissertation involves creating a plausible historical setting for Paul's audience (ch. 2) and then reconstructing Paul's implied audience for Rom: the identity of the audience which can be discerned from the text itself (ch. 3). In ch. 2, I recapitulate the history of Judeans in Rome, in order to demonstrate (1) the plausibility of non-Judean Jews in Rome before the belief in Jesus of Nazareth as a Messiah of Israel reached Rome and (2) the implausibility of any conclusion that when Paul wrote Rom a chasm existed between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers. Having established that such an audience is plausible, in ch. 3 I marshal the evidence, using social identity theory and Paul's rhetoric, as to why I read Rom as to an implied audience composed of non-

⁵ At the time Paul wrote Rom, the temple in Jerusalem still stood and the sacrificial cult was central to the life of the surrounding population. Jews in Jerusalem could avail themselves of the temple as prescribed in the Torah. In other words, the Religion of Israel was still vibrant. "Judaism," as the religion forged by the rabbis and others after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. did not yet exist at this time. In that sense, both the terms "Judaism" and "Jew" are anachronistic. I use these terms in this work, however, to keep my terms from becoming even more distractingly clunky.

Judean Jewish Jesus followers. By the “implied audience” of Rom I I mean that audience the reader can discern from the text itself. It is the audience that the author pictures mentally when fashioning an argument and may be deduced from the language, contents, and style of the text. A careful reader of the *Financial Times*, for instance, deduces that the newspaper is published for a well-off, well-educated English literate audience who share a global perspective on business matters.⁶ From this description of the *Financial Times*’ audience, the analyst could go on to predict and then confirm that the paper’s editorial page policy will promote the interests of the broadest swath of the audience, challenging government regulations and taxes, for instance. Were the *FT* instead to promote the expansion of labor unions, higher taxes to support welfare payments, and increased environmental controls, the analyst would question seriously whether the description of the implied audience is accurate. Perhaps a second reading would suggest that the implied audience really is composed of academic labor economists, for instance. The brief analysis of the *Financial Times* illustrates how the implied audience can be detected legitimately from a text and how the stance of the writer on an important issue will take account of this implied audience.

⁶ The reader first will deduce from the fact the paper is sold and not distributed free on the streets that it is a published by a for-profit enterprise. The language in which the newspaper is written presumes an English literate audience. The content, the articles and essays, indicates a readership whose primary, but not sole, interest is with the management and financing of business and commercial matters, with a first priority to the United Kingdom. This emphasis is reinforced by what is not included: detailed engineering or scientific discussions; regular, extensive coverage of sports, fashion, and entertainment; photographs (especially photographs of celebrities); comic strips. The writing style – choice of words, length of sentences and paragraphs – indicates a relatively well-educated audience. The advertisements suggest that the advertisers believe that the readers are relatively wealthy with significant disposable income. That the *FT* is found in a hotel in Singapore, a library in Denver, and an office in Johannesburg emphasizes the global breadth of the audience.

In ch. 4, I bring together the question of the audience for Rom and Paul's treatment of the Law. I argue that Paul wrote in Rom to those still under the Law, Jews, while in Gal (for example) Paul wrote to non-Jews whom he wished to bring to the worship of the God of Israel as non-Jews. Hence, for one audience, Romans, the Law is still to be honored, while for another, the Galatians, only certain portions of the Law are to be pursued. The corollary is that Paul's letter is congruent with the Jewish Law.

Although I appeal to specific parts of Rom throughout these chapters, I do not provide an analysis of the letter as a whole nor does my analysis follow the flow of the argument of the letter. In the fifth and last chapter, therefore, I offer a brief summary of Rom, from 1:1 to 16:24. My intent is to demonstrate how well the construction of the audience in chs. 2 and 3 and the interpretation of Paul's writing on the Law in ch. 4 cohere into an intelligible reading of the letter.

Three Foundational Issues

In the following three sections, I engage three critical subjects. The first is the particular text of Rom I am reading. Here I also briefly discuss the relevance of the other major NT text often used to describe the Pauline mission, Acts.

The second subject concerns the terminology I employ throughout the work. I categorize persons about whom Paul writes three ways: Judean or non-Judean (referring to their country of origin), Jew and non-Jew (referring to their cultic observance), and Jesus follower or not (accepting Jesus as Messiah, the Christ). While the resulting terminology may aptly be called "clunky," I find it nonetheless helpful in keeping my

own arguments straight and avoiding too many anachronistic references to Paul's audience, colleagues, and followers.

The third issue is the purpose for Paul's writing to a community with which he claims to have had no previous experience.⁷ I join with many other scholars in concluding that Paul wrote seeking assistance from the Roman Jesus followers. As a petitioner, Paul needed to demonstrate to the Romans that his gospel was compatible with their own religious system. Just as the publishers of *Financial Times* carefully address their audience, using the best arguments possible to secure their advertising revenue, so Paul in Rom advanced his arguments to secure the support of the Roman Jesus followers.

The Text of Romans

For my work, I rely principally on the text critical work of Robert Jewett in his 2007 *Hermeneia* commentary.⁸ Jewett concluded that the argument over the destination

⁷ Stanley Stowers has challenged the practice of assuming that NT documents "sprang from and mirrored communities." Stanley K. Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of Early Christianity," *MTSR* 23, no. 3-4 (2011): 238-56, here 238. Stowers focuses attention on scholars' use of the Gospels and the Corinthian correspondence to reconstruct a community and to then reify the literary creation into what is claimed to be an historically accurate portrait of a single, largely homogenous community, ignoring the diversity apparent in the texts and the social history of the times. Stowers comments "the approach robs Paul of the creativity and known tendencies of writers and speakers to produce writings that have a rhetorical and artistic semi-autonomy and that respond to imagined audiences in broadly creative rather than narrowly specific ways." Stowers, "Community," 248. According to Rom 16, Paul knew of three identifiable groups of Jesus followers in Rome (the *ecclesia* at the house of Prisca and Aquila [v. 5], and the households of Aristobulus and Narcissus [vv. 10, 11]). Paul gives no indication that he knew of any differences in practices or beliefs among these three, but such an argument from silence gives no certainty that there were only three groups, that these groups were in contact with each other, shared practices and beliefs, or were (in modern terms) in communion with each other. Responding to Stowers' warning, I mean the term "community," as in "the community of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers," to signify (a) the historically plausible reconstruction of the group of Jesus followers in Rome at the time of Paul and/or (b) the implied audience for Rom, Paul's imagined audience. My focus must be on the mind of Paul as evidenced in Rom, leaving the question of the historical accuracy of Paul's imagined community to others.

⁸ Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary on the Book of Romans* (*Hermeneia*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 4-18.

of this letter had been definitively settled in favor of Rome and, in agreement with, *inter alia*, Harry Y. Gamble and Peter Lampe, posited a 16 chapter letter as the most likely earliest edition of the letter. Jewett concluded that the most probable letter was 1:1-16:16 + 16:21-23 + 24.⁹ Compared with NA²⁷, this removes from the text two passages Jewett identified as later interpolations (an exhortation to avoid certain teachers [16:17-20] and the concluding doxology [16:25-27]), but includes the benediction of 16:24, currently omitted in NA²⁷, as a conclusion. For my work, only the question of the removal of 16:17-20 has any saliency. If these verses were included, their witness to teachers hostile to Paul would strengthen my argument that Paul is expecting some resistance to his gospel from within the Roman community (see below, Purpose of Romans). I find Jewett's arguments sufficiently persuasive, however, that, in an abundance of caution, I will defer to him and omit discussing these verses.¹⁰ As to the doxology at 16:25-27, it is marked in brackets in NA²⁷, indicating that the text is a matter of conjecture. Brendan Byrne comments that there is "a virtually unanimous judgment that the doxology was not a part of Paul's original letter to Rome but something added . . ."¹¹

⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 8-9, 18.

¹⁰ Jewett puts forth four major arguments for considering these verses a later interpolation: (1) the verses "produce an egregious break in the flow" of the greetings to the Romans from Paul personally (vv. 3-16) and from those with Paul (vv.21-24); (2) they directly contradict the characterization of the Romans as "obedient to faith" and the call in Rom 14-15 for welcoming Jesus' followers of all practices; (3) hapax legomena are unusually numerous in these verses; and (4) discouraging greeting *everyone* with a holy kiss provides a plausible reason for placing the interpolation precisely here. Jewett, *Romans*, 986-88. Esler argues strongly for including these verses, concluding "From this analysis I conclude that 16:17-20 relates directly to affairs in Rome and that the problems it warns against relate directly to issues Paul has ventilated earlier in the letter, notably in 14:1-15:13." Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 126-28, quotation from 128.

¹¹ Brendan J. Byrne, *Romans* (Collegeville Minn: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 461-62.

Verse 24 is omitted from NA²⁷, but is considered authentic by Jewett.¹² One reason Jewett includes the verse is that all other Pauline letters, undisputed and disputed, have a form of benediction like the one in v. 24 at the conclusion of the letter.¹³ With the deletion of the interpolated vv. 25-27, v. 24 becomes the concluding verse and the benediction is completely appropriate for the letter.

While the questions about which verses to include or not are hard-core questions of text criticism, the appropriate use of Acts requires a different kind of assessment. The degree of reliability to attribute to Acts is a perennial question in Pauline scholarship. Ferdinand C. Baur, in the mid-19th century, took exception with those who would take Acts in precedence to the writing of Paul himself.¹⁴ Acts, produced at least a generation after Paul wrote to the Romans, was written to address the issues of its age and not to provide modern historians with historical details on the life of Paul.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Baur, and many scholars after him, used Acts to frame their narrative of Paul's life, including referring to Paul's "conversion to Christianity" despite the fact that Paul himself refers to

¹² Jewett, *Romans*, 7, 1012.

¹³ Jewett, *Romans*, 7.

¹⁴ Ferdinand C. Baur, *Paul The Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine* (trans. E. Zeller; 2 vols.; London: Williams and Norgae, 1876), 3-14.

¹⁵ Richard I. Pervo dates Acts to c. 115 C.E., and finds the author's "focus was on the protection of established communities from external and internal threats. The standing of believers, who may be called 'Christians,' in the larger society became a leading concern, for both missionary and political reasons. Rival interpretations of the Christian message constituted serious problems." Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 5. Writing four decades earlier, Hans Conzelman put the probable production of Acts to 80-100 C.E. Hans Conzelman, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia; trans. J. Limburg, et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 5. Conzelman concluded that fundamental to understanding Acts is the author's tri-partite view of salvation history: the time of Israel, the time of Jesus, and the time of the Church. Conzelman, *Acts*, xlv. As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, my work concludes that Paul viewed his beliefs about Jesus Christ as consistent with the continuation of the religion of Israel, not as superseding it.

his “call” to proclaim his gospel to the nations/Gentiles. Baur in essence privileges the accounts in Acts over Paul’s disclosure in Gal 1:15, and employs “Christian” even though no one used the term “Christian” in Paul’s day.¹⁶

Use of Acts by other scholars, and, indeed, Acts’ witness to the development of the first communities of Jesus followers, requires every writer on Paul to deal with this book. Cognizant of the problems inherent in treating Acts as one might a modern history of this period in antiquity, I always privilege Paul’s own accounts of his personal history over Acts. I refer extensively to Acts in its account of the meeting between Paul and the married couple Aquilla and Prisca in Acts 18:2 ff. There, and elsewhere, I make an effort to follow the logic of Acts’ narrative: how Acts wants the reader to understand the import of these actions. I am not passing any judgment, positive or negative, on the value of Acts’ accounts as “history.” Rather, I am asking what the author of Acts, writing to third or fourth generation Jesus’ followers wanted his audience to believe about the earliest Jesus followers.

For similar reasons, I restrict my references for understanding Paul’s teaching outside Rom to the six other undisputed letters: 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thes and Phlm.

My Terminology

My argument requires that I address what constituted a “Jew” in antiquity. Could one be a Jew as well as a Roman or Greek? In the twenty-first century, one is accustomed to speaking of multiple social identities. Thus, Barack Obama is male, an American politician, President of the United States, a Protestant Christian, a lawyer, a

¹⁶ Baur, *Paul*, 61-89.

Constitutional expert, an African-American, a Democrat, a husband, a brother and a father. Any one of these identities and sub-identities may be salient at any particular time. New identities may be taken on and old identities lost. Mr. Obama, for example, until the death of his grandmother in 2008 was also a grandson. United States Representative Michelle Bachmann gained and lost Swiss citizenship in the space of a few months. In order to persuade his audiences of his gospel, Paul would have been sensitive to the complexity of multiple categorizations of identities in the audiences for his gospel.

I have constructed a system in which I make three distinctions, between (1) “Judean” and “non-Judean” (a ethnogeographic division), (2) “Jew” and “non-Jew” (an ethnoreligious division), and (3) “Jesus follower” and “non-Jesus follower” (a sectarian division within Judaism). The terms in each pair are mutually exclusive, but the three pairs may be grouped in a variety of ways. The reasons for the adoption of this system are set out in this section in two parts. The first discusses the uses of the terms “Jew” and “Judean,” and *why I use both as distinct terms*. The second shorter section describes the use of the term “Jesus follower” rather than “Christian.” A third section summarizes and illustrates how the system works.

Jews and Judeans

It is my personal observation that the term “Jew,” in early 21st century America, is a term with, ultimately, a single definition: a Jew is someone who describes herself as a Jew, whether (at the extremes) she is a participant in an Orthodox synagogue or an

avowed atheist, whether born in the United States or in Israel.¹⁷ In current NT scholarship, the question of who is a Jew surfaces in the question of how to translate the term Ἰουδαῖος. Caroline Johnson Hodge provides a perspective on this debate: “If ever there was a can of worms in New Testament scholarship, the translation of *Ioudaios* is one.”¹⁸ The question usually is framed as to whether the term is to be understood as an ethnogeographical designation—hence “Judean,” as one coming from Judea – or religious – hence “Jew,” a person “of whatever ethnic or geographical origin who worships[s] the God whose temple is . . . in Jerusalem.”¹⁹ Phillip Esler points out that the translation issue “is not simply a question of nomenclature, since it goes to the heart of how the identity of the people was understood by themselves and by their contemporaries.”²⁰ In pre-Shoah scholarship, Ἰουδαῖος was reflexively translated “Jew.” In the latter part of the last century, encouraged by increasing sensitivity about the way

¹⁷ “Jews for Jesus” present a possible exception to this system of self-ascription. The popular culture has several stories of such Jews and their designation by other Jews as Christians, for example in “Fiddler on the Roof.” At the same time, non-Jews may well refer to them as Jews. So Edith Stein was a victim of the Shoah even though she was a Roman Catholic but, because of birth, was classed Jewish under the Nazi Aryan Laws.

A reliance on self-identification is echoed by Shaye Cohen when he states that the two ways one might plausibly, but not probatively identify a Jew in antiquity were if he associated with Jews or observed Jewish laws, i.e, engaged in activities that Jews did. Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginning of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 53. Fredrik Barth’s important 1969 essay on ethnic identity emphasizes the role of ascription by the self and others of the particular ethnic identity rather than particular cultures or genealogical descent. Fredrik Barth, “Introduction,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (ed. F. Barth; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 9-38, particularly 10-15.

¹⁸ Caroline E. Johnson Hodge, *If Sons then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13.

¹⁹ Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Judaism and Jewishness,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation* (eds. A.-J. Levine and M. Z. Brettler; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 513-15, here 513.

²⁰ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 62.

Biblical texts have been used to foster anti-Semitism, the practice of translating the term as “Judean” developed. Supporting this change, the 2000 edition of BDAG opens with a traditional translation of the term: “one who identifies with beliefs, rites, and customs of adherents of Israel’s Mosaic and prophetic tradition . . .” but goes on to say:

Since the term “Judaism” suggests a monolithic entity that fails to take account of the many varieties of thought and social expression associated with such adherents, the calque or loanword “Judean” is used in this and other entries where [Ἰουδαῖος] is treated. Complicating the semantic problem is the existence side by side of persons who had genealogy on their side and those who became proselytes . . . also of adherents of Moses who recognized Jesus as Messiah . . . and those who did not do so. Incalculable harm has been caused by simply glossing [Ἰουδαῖος] with “Jew,” for many readers or auditors of Bible translations do not practice the historical judgment necessary to distinguish between circumstances and events of an ancient time and contemporary ethnic-religious-social realities, with the result that anti-Judaism in the modern sense of the term is needlessly fostered through biblical texts.²¹

The BDAG editors seem willing to stretch their scholarly judgments in the interest of social justice, acknowledging that the term carried a socio-religious connotation in antiquity but suggesting a geographic connotation for the modern reader.

The term Ἰουδαῖος is derived from the Hebrew יהודה, (*yehuda*, Greek, Ἰούδας) referring to, first, the second son of Israel, and, later, to the portion of the Promised Land allocated to the tribe taken to be his descendants. During the Persian period, the overlord administrators gave the whole country the name “Judea,” Ἰουδαία. In a short time, Greek speaking outsiders attributed the name of the country to the inhabitants, who were then Ἰουδαῖοι. Thus the term originally carried an ethnogeographical connotation applied to the inhabitants of the region by outsiders.

²¹ BDAG, “Ἰουδαῖος κ.τ.λ.” 478.

In contrast to its use by outsiders, post-Exilic Hebrew scriptures and post-Biblical writings (e.g., Sirach) continued to use the older, insider term, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, “sons of Israel,” translated into Greek Ἰσραηλιῖται, “Israelites.”²² As I shall demonstrate in chapter 2, Jews in Rome and elsewhere around the Mediterranean spoke Greek first and Hebrew only as secondary languages. As a consequence, Ἰουδαῖος, originally an outsider term, eventually became the normal way for Jews to refer to each other and related adjectival forms (from Ἰουδαϊκός) were used to refer to the “ways of the Ἰουδαῖοι.” The 1989 L&N edition referred to Ἰουδαῖος as “the ethnic name of a person who belongs to the Jewish nation.”²³ The adjective is then referred to as “pertaining to the Jewish nation – Jewish.”²⁴

A temptation when following this line of argument is to assume a one-to-one correspondence between ethnogeographic and ethnoreligious identity: a Macedonian citizen of Thessaloniki (for example) who adopted the Religion of Israel is then a Ἰουδαῖον, and no longer a Macedonian. Paula Fredriksen comments that “. . . in antiquity, gods were local in a dual sense. They attached to particular *places*, whether natural (groves, grottos, mountains, springs) or man-made (temples and altars, urban or

²² David Goodblatt, “‘The Israelites who Reside in Judah’ (Judith 4:1): On the Conflicted Identities of the Hasmonean State,” in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity* (eds. L. I. Levine and D. R. Schwartz; TSAJ; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 74-89.

²³ L&N, “Ἰουδαῖος” 93.487, 837.

²⁴ L&N, “Ἰουδαϊκός” 93.171, 824.

rural). And gods also attached to particular *peoples*; ‘religion’ ran in the blood.”²⁵ In a later section of this chapter, I discuss the development of “transnational cults” that distanced religion from geography. Here, I simply observe that in the Greek and Roman empires a relatively free movement of peoples was accompanied by the movement of cults as well. Not only did traditional adherents practice their cult in foreign lands, but also non-traditional devotees, people living in the immigrant’s new home territory, adopted the practices of the cult. The cults of Mithras (traditionally thought of as from Persia) and Isis (from Egypt) are probably the best known “transnational” cults, but the phenomenon of proselytes to Judaism follows the same pattern. Though these three cults had been born in particular geographic areas, the subsequent movement of peoples throughout the Empire brought persons from other nations into observance of the cults. Thus, by the time of Paul, “religion,” as practiced in individual cults, was starting to become distinct from nationality.²⁶

Shaye J. D. Cohen argues that from the Hasmonean period (c. 150 B.C.E.) the term *Ἰουδαῖος* took on two connotations, one political (a citizen of the Hasmonean kingdom) and the second “religious” (a worshiper of the God of Israel).²⁷ Of special interest to my

²⁵ Paula Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’? Jews, Gentiles and the Ancient Mediterranean City,” in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (eds. A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed; TSAJ. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2007), 39.

²⁶ Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 48-76. The phenomenon of conversion to the Religion of Israel is discussed at length in the next chapter.

²⁷ Cohen, *Beginnng*, 105. Goodblat notes the exception to the general rule – Hebrew writers refer to Israelites, Greek writers to *Ἰουδαῖοι* – in that the documents produced by the Hasmonean bureaucracy, originally produced in Hebrew and produced for the people, referred to the people as *Ἰουδαῖοι*. Goodblat, “Conflicted Identities”, 75, 89.

project, is Cohen's contention that it was in this same period that it first became possible for non-Judeans to join the nation of Judea and/or to become Jews in the religious sense.²⁸ Cohen goes on to argue that with the fall of the Hasmonean dynasty, the political connotation gradually lost its relevance and the term increasingly took on a purely "religious" connotation.²⁹ Following Cohen, one would take the term Ἰουδαϊός, when used by Paul or other NT writers, to refer to one who follows particular religious practices.

In his 2007 article, Steve Mason disputed Cohen's construct.³⁰ Mason focused on the related term Ἰουδαϊσμός, commonly translated "Judaism," arguing that the term, whose first TLG entry is in the LXX (five times) and appears in the NT only in the Pauline literature (Gal 1:13, 14), always referred to the movement "toward or away from Judaeans law and life, in contrast to some other cultural pull."³¹ This is the sense in which Christians began to use the term in the third to fifth centuries C.E. along with such terms as "*Hellenismos/Paganismos* . . . as foil[s], to facilitate polemical contrast."³² Since Western thought had no notion of religion as a phenomenon "isolable" from the general culture until the Enlightenment, Ἰουδαϊσμός could not have enjoyed the connotation of

²⁸ Cohen, *Beginnng*, 136.

²⁹ Cohen, *Beginnng*, 105.

³⁰ Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38, no. 4-5 (2007): 457-512.

³¹ Mason, "Jews, Judaizing," 511.

³² Mason, "Jews, Judaizing," 511-12. A TLG search on the term confirms Mason's underlying analysis. Of the 350 occurrences of Ἰουδαϊσμός in TLG, none appears before the LXX and the first appearances after Paul occur in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch.

specific cultic or religious practices but referred to the way of life of those who lived in Judea, and, as a consequence, the related term Ἰουδαῖος must have referred to one with ties to Judea, a Judean.³³

Daniel Boyarin took a position very similar to Mason's, arguing from the linguistic rule that terms can only have a meaning in opposition to other terms.

The oppositional term to the various religions of the Ancient Near East with which the Israelites were in contact has to have been "the Israelite cult," in the broadest sense of "cult/ure," not because of substantive difference between this and the religion that we call Judaism [i.e., Ἰουδαϊσμός] (although there is, of course, such and much), but because this was what it was: the cult, in all of its various forms and subvarieties, of the ethnic group called Israel, and not a "religion." The other terms within the paradigm to which this signifier belongs are "the cult/ure of Assyria," "the cult/ure of Egypt," "the cult/ure of Canaan," and ultimately "the cult/ure of Greece" as well.³⁴

In this understanding, the term Ἰουδαϊσμός (and by extension Ἰουδαῖος) must have referred to the particular cultural habits of the inhabitants of Judea, including, *inter alia*, the temple cult. All religious practices, in other words, were tied to particular geographically designated peoples. This situation changed, Boyarin goes on to say, only when Χριστιανῖσμος, "Christianity," became a legitimate "other." Then Ἰουδαϊσμός could take on a "religious" significance.³⁵ In Paul's time, then, what we call religion today remains inextricably linked with place of birth or putative place of origin: Ἰουδαῖος should be translated "Judean."

³³ Mason, "Jews, Judaizing," 512.

³⁴ Daniel Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity'," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (eds. A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed; TSAJ. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 65-85, here 70.

³⁵ Boyarin, "Semantic Differences", 71.

Esler devotes a considerable portion of his monograph *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* to the question of the translation of Ἰουδαῖος, and reaches a more complex conclusion.³⁶ Esler has two premises I wish to highlight. The first is that absent any other information, a name given to a people refers to their geographic place of origin, a fact noted above regarding Ἰουδαῖος.³⁷ The second premise is that in antiquity, one could have multiple ethnic identities, just as an immigrant to the United States from Poland might self-identify as a “Polish American.”³⁸ Addressing Cohen’s argument directly, Esler disputes Cohen’s assertion that, in certain circumstances, the term Ἰουδαῖος is translated properly “Jew” after 100 B.C.E., instead moving the earliest date to more than two centuries later, to the conclusion of the Bar Kohba revolt in 135 B.C.E.³⁹ He finds that, in the first century, Ἰουδαῖος and other similar Greek terms overwhelmingly retained their ethnogeographic connotation, in this case Judea.⁴⁰ It is not that the country of origin completely determines ethnicity, but that the ancients attributed the source of many particular traits, including religion, to the geography of their homelands.⁴¹ The territorial connotation is buttressed by the observation that Judeans throughout the Mediterranean retained a close affinity with their

³⁶ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 40-76, particularly 62-74.

³⁷ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 58-60.

³⁸ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 49-50, 60.

³⁹ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 74.

⁴⁰ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 73.

⁴¹ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 58-60.

homeland, as witnessed by payment of the temple tax, pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and special ceremonies in Diaspora synagogues at the time of the great feasts.⁴² Finally, Esler faults Cohen for what Esler describes as “overlook[ing] the phenomenon of dual (let alone multi-) ethnic identities.”⁴³ Esler claims that Cohen would describe Atomos (whom Josephus describes as born a Cypriot and then a convert to “Judaism” [A.J. 20.142]) as a “Jew” while Esler would refer to him as “Cyprian and Judean.”⁴⁴ In other words, as far as Esler is concerned, the term Ἰουδαῖος refers to the cultic practices of those who live in Judea.

In 2007, Daniel Schwartz published “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’? How Should We Translate *Ioudaios* in Josephus?”⁴⁵ In translating Josephus, Schwartz finds 10 reasons to use the “more complicated and ambiguous term” “Jew” rather than “Judean”.⁴⁶ The most compelling reasons I summarize as follows.

Epigraphic evidence: Ἰουδαῖος appeared to have as wide a semantic meaning as the modern English term Jew. On inscriptions, the terms Ἰουδαῖος in Greek and *Judaeus* in Latin were used both for those with ties to the land, whether born in Judea or in the Diaspora, and for those who converted to Judaism.⁴⁷

Use of the term for the subregion Judea: In B.J.2:43, Josephus recounts how Galileans, Idumeans, and people from Judea (ὁ γνήσις ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἰουδαίας

⁴² Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 64-65.

⁴³ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 73.

⁴⁴ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 73.

⁴⁵ Daniel R. Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’? How Should We Translate *Ioudaios* in Josephus?,” in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (eds. J. Frey, et al.; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), 3-28.

⁴⁶ Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’?,” 12-22.

⁴⁷ Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’?,” 12.

λαός) formed a common front against Rome. In this case revolutionaries came from different regions of the one country, including those specifically referred to as Judeans who came from Judea. This prompts Schwartz to ask: What was the genus of which these were species? And Schwartz finds that Josephus gave the same answer we would: they were all Jews.⁴⁸

Pagan inhabitants: By analogy with Josephus' use of ethnic terms to refer to religious practitioners, Schwartz reasons that Josephus meant Ἰουδαῖος to also have a religious sense. In his work, Josephus used Ἕλληνες to refer to pagan inhabitants of Judea and other places in the Mediterranean. Schwartz reasons that if Josephus meant the term to refer only to residents of a particular place, then one would expect references to pagan Ἰουδαῖοι, but there are not: instead Josephus calls them Ἕλληνες.⁴⁹

Schwartz does point out evidence nuancing his major conclusion, including the fact that it is clear that in *B. J.* Josephus is likely to associate the term Ἰουδαῖος with descent and territory, but seems to have changed his usage of the term in *A.J.* to a “religious” designation more than a geographical one.⁵⁰ His final reason, however, is that if Ἰουδαῖοι is translated into English as “Judean,” the very infrequency of the use of “Judean” in English ties the Greek term Ἰουδαῖοι unambiguously to a singular place, Judea, and to a singular geographic designation, contrary to the ambiguity of the term in antiquity. So restricted to a geographic reference, the term would not include the presence of proselytes in the community of worshippers of the God of Israel, contrary to the epigraphic evidence set out above.⁵¹ In the next chapter, I provide support for this latter

⁴⁸ Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’?,” 13. Esler spends some time on this same passage and believes that the term γνήσιος should not be interpreted as referring to a particular ethnic group but rather a group of Ἰουδαῖοι who lived in Judea. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 67, 71.

⁴⁹ Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’?,” 14-15.

⁵⁰ Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’?,” 17, 18-19.

⁵¹ Schwartz, “‘Judean’ or ‘Jew’?,” 21-22.

contention. There, I highlight the evidence that “cradle Jews” distinguished between themselves and proselytes (i.e., those who did not trace their ancestry to the historic land of Israel). This evidence shows that genealogy not only could be but was distinguishable in antiquity from religious affiliation.

Amy-Jill Levine also addressed the translation issue extensively in *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*.⁵² There, Levine was intent on showing that Jesus of Nazareth must be located properly within his first century religious and social context in order to be properly understood in the 21st century. Within that project, she was concerned to refer to Jesus properly: was he a Judean? a Jew? a Galilean? While rehearsing many of the arguments discussed already, her contribution is to drive home one of the implications of Schwartz’s last argument, that translating Ἰουδαῖος as Judean may contribute to the very anti-Semitism use of the term was meant to dispel. She points out that scholars using the term “Judean” may refer to Jesus of Nazareth as a Galilean, his putative birth place in Palestine, and not a Jew, if Ἰουδαῖος means one from the territory of Judea. The change in terminology annuls the historical, social, and theological link between Jesus, and therefore Christianity, and both Second Temple and early Jewish practices and beliefs.⁵³ She recommends that “rather than just claiming Jesus is a Galilean as opposed to a Judean and so losing any connection to the term ‘Jew,’ [it is] preferable . . . to see Jesus as a ‘Galilean Jew’ and

⁵² Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006).

⁵³ Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 162-65.

Josephus as a ‘Judean Jew.’ The ‘both/and’ model is clearer to modern readers than ‘either/or.’”⁵⁴

Johnson Hodge, in the 2007 monograph previously cited, describes her own move from translating the term “Judean” to translating it as “Jew,” particularly noting Levine’s arguments.⁵⁵ Despite this decision, Johnson Hodge recognizes the limitations of the use of the term.⁵⁶

As will become evident in subsequent chapters, it is my argument that Paul presupposes that different communities of Jesus followers would vary in their adoption of the Torah heritage of Jesus and his first followers. I need to be able to identify this range; in order to have the required precision, I have adopted both terms, Jew and Judean, and as antonyms, non-Jew and non-Judean.⁵⁷ In fact, my system is quite similar to Esler’s, but I prefer to reserve the terminology of non-Judean to refer to genealogy and Jew to refer to religious practice and affiliation. As I will discuss in the next chapter, and as discussed by Schwartz, there is a need for a term that covers both those born into a family that worships the God of Israel and any who are proselytes to that form of worship. In modern

⁵⁴ Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 162.

⁵⁵ Johnson Hodge, *If Sons*, 14-16.

⁵⁶ Johnson Hodge, *If Sons*, 17.

⁵⁷ The question “who is a Jew” I address in ch. 3. There I use certain practices for defining who would be a Jew – aniconic monotheistic worship, placing authority in the Hebrew scriptures, affinity with Jerusalem, circumcision. I have no way of testing directly whether the audience of Rom fits these criteria. The fact is, however, that even if I could somehow know that it would be irrelevant to my argument. I am concerned, instead, with discerning whether *Paul* believed that he was writing to an audience composed of Jews *and wrote in such a way that we can discern his belief*. So in ch. 3 I consider the material Paul chose, the language he used to characterize his relationship with the audience, and his understanding of the relationship between these characteristics and the audience.

times, we would call them both “Jews,” just as (for example) Sammy Davis Jr. was referred to as a Jew when speaking of his religious practices. At the same time, as will be clearer in the subsequent chapters, it is important to be able to mark the difference between “cradle Jews” and proselytes.

I use the term “Jew” as a religious marker throughout this essay. To complement that term, I use the term “Judean” as an ethnogeographical mark of a person’s country of origin. Here I hasten to add that the term “Judean” refers not to the place of birth but to the individual’s identification with a country, putatively the country of origin. In this way, I include as “Judean” those born in the Jewish Diaspora of antiquity. I mentioned earlier Esler’s description of the links between those Jews born outside the homeland and the homeland itself as a mark of the continued relationship thereto.⁵⁸ In modern American discourse, these are analogous to “hyphenated Americans:” Irish-Americans, for example, who despite the fact that they are the second or third generation born in the United States, still celebrate St. Patrick’s Day as a mark of identity and feel a special affection and concern for Ireland (and in the past may have even donated funds to the terrorist Irish Republican Army).

In my system, Paul is a Judean Jew. Though Acts reports that he was born in Tarsus, in Asia Minor (Acts 22:3), because he claims to be an Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5; cf. 2 Cor 11:22), I classify him a Judean.⁵⁹ In chapter 3, I

⁵⁸ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 64-65.

⁵⁹ I emphasize that it is only in Acts that Paul is identified as having been born in the Diaspora. I find it interesting, in addition, that in Acts’ account of Paul’s self-portrait of having been born in Tarsus, that he affirms that he was trained “in this city,” Jerusalem, and educated “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3).

demonstrate how Paul is also a Jew, one who follows the religion of Israel. Thus he is a Judean Jew. In the NT, Jesus and the apostles are also Judean Jews, though they come from Galilee. Herod the Great, born a pagan Idumean, converted, and is classed a non-Judean Jew. Once he renounced the authority of the scriptures of Israel, and stopped observing the Sabbath and dietary restrictions, Alexander, the apostate nephew of Philo of Alexandria, becomes a Judean non-Jew. The members of Paul's community in Galatia are non-Judean, non-Jews.

As to the discussion of the proper translation of Ἰουδαῖος, I have concluded that there is no single term to be applied in all cases. The scholarly work reviewed above, when viewed dispassionately, shows the term carried many connotations. A single multivalent English term, Jew, cannot translate, with precision in all cases, a multivalent Greek term, Ἰουδαῖος. Later in this work, I devote a good deal of effort to a similar situation, the proper translation of the preposition ἀπὸ. The Greek preposition carries different denotations in different contexts, just as its usual English equivalent, "from" does (e.g., "from" denoting distance or perhaps origin). As a result, translation must follow context.

Paul uses the term Ἰουδαῖος 11 times in Rom, seven contrasting with either Ἑλλήν or ἔθνος (e.g., Rom 1:16), and four referring to an individual following the practices of the Religion of Israel (e.g., 2:28-29). In all 11 cases, Paul's reference is to

Acts apparently wishes to portray Paul as being sent off to be educated in Jerusalem apart from his family, as the sons of Herod the Great were educated in Rome.

one living within the covenant with the God of Israel, leading me to translate the term in Rom (and where it appears in Gal) as “Jew,” one who lives within that covenant.

Jesus followers or Christians

At the time of the writing of Rom, I contend that many of those who accepted Jesus as Messiah still considered themselves Jews.⁶⁰ Indeed, this work is committed to the proposition that Paul envisioned a Jewish audience in Rome for his letter, meaning they did not view themselves as having separated from the rest of the Jewish community by their acceptance of Jesus as Christ, Messiah. There is no doubt in my mind that the Roman community differed radically from the vision that Paul had for the Galatian community: to avoid circumcision and not to be Jewish. What is the vocabulary that allows one to discuss the diverse communities as having, in some sense, one mind?

Magnus Zetterholm argued that application of the terms “Christianity” and “Christian” to this earliest Jesus movement suggests

... one fairly homogeneous group with a common theology, a common religious identity and a common cultic behaviour. The very idea that Jews and non-Jews merged together into “a third race” is partly the result of one of the cornerstones in the traditional paradigm regarding the earliest Jesus movement, namely that Paul argued that the Torah had ceased to have any relevance for those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah. This idea, which is a direct result of a theological construction with roots in an anti-Jewish tradition within Christianity, is almost always taken for granted, and scholars never feel the need to argue for its accuracy.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Among the many supporting references possible from current scholarship, Daniel Boyarin provides a concise and helpful description of the extent of the continuing Jewish-Christian interaction through the fourth century in his “Introduction” for *Dying for God*. Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (RMC; Stanford Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1-21.

⁶¹ Magnus Zetterholm, “Jews, Christians, and Gentile: Rethinking the Categorization within the Early Jesus Movement” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation* (eds. K. Ehrensperger and J. B. Tucker; LNTS; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 245. Zetterholm’s work has clear resonance

In contrast to the “third race” tradition, Zetterholm finds Raymond Brown’s enumeration of “*at least four different types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity*,” helpful but still based on the traditional paradigm that found the acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah as a “conversion” from Judaism.⁶² Furthermore, Zetterholm points out that even though the view that Paul remained a Torah-observant Jew for all of his life is still a minority view, the fact of the view’s existence requires a framework and a language allowing it to be discussed.⁶³ To that end, Zetterholm proposes that “Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah are best referred to as Jewish followers or disciples of Jesus. Non-Jews who shared this belief are consequently referred to in a similar manner.”⁶⁴

The very title of her 2009 monograph, *Paul was not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle*, declares that Pamela Eisenbaum is among the minority Zetterholm cites who view Paul as an observant Jew throughout his career. Throughout this work, Eisenbaum emphasizes that Paul – in his own words and not that of Acts – describes his acceptance of Jesus as Messiah as the result of a revelation from the God of Israel and his subsequent mission to non-Judean non-Jews as a “call” and

with the work of Stowers cited earlier on the references to “Christian communities.” Stowers, “Community.”

⁶² Zetterholm, “Jews, Christians, and Gentiles,” 247-48. Zetterholm is here referencing Raymond E. Brown, “Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity but Types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity,” *CBQ* 45, no. 1 (1983): 74-79, here 75. Zetterholm and Brown are not alone in proposing viewing earliest “Christianity” and “Judaism” as points on a spectrum of practice and belief. See also Boyarin, “Semantic Differences,” 83. Cohen and Paula Fredriksen add to the notion of a Christian-Jewish continuum a similar continuum for pagans and Jews. Cohen, *Beginnng*, 141-56. Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’?,” 35-63, here 41-46.

⁶³ Zetterholm, “Jews, Christians, and Gentiles,” 249.

⁶⁴ Zetterholm, “Jews, Christians, and Gentiles,” 253.

response to that revelation.⁶⁵ The view that Paul viewed himself as remaining an observant Jew after his acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah is substantiated in chapter 3 below.

It is clear that in the earliest “Christian” literature, the term “Christian” was used rarely. It appears three times in the NT, twice in Acts and once in 1 Peter. Both works are generally dated to the late first or early second century, when the term becomes much more common. In other words, there is no reason to expect that Paul himself ever used the term and every reason to find that designating the Pauline communities “Christian” anachronistic. As a consequence of these arguments, I use the terms “Jesus follower,” and as its antonym, “non-Jesus-follower.”

“There Are Nine Kinds of People in the World . . .”

The joke goes something like this: “There are *two* kinds of people in the world: those who divide the world into two kinds of people and those who don’t.” I put myself in the second category. The useful combinations of Judean and non-Judean, Jew and not-Jew, Jesus follower and not, come to nine groups, as shown below, along with examples of each of the categories.

⁶⁵ On non-Pauline portraits of his change, see Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 32-54, especially 32-43. Eisenbaum exegetes Paul’s own words at 134-41. On Paul receiving a call rather than undergoing conversion, see also Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 7-23.

Table 1
Categories of People

Classification	Examples
Judean	
(1) Jewish	Jesus of Nazareth, Abraham, Moses
(2) Non-Jesus- Follower	Philo, Josephus
(3) Jesus follower	Peter, Paul (e.g., Eisenbaum, Haugh, Zetterholm)
Non-Jewish	
(4) Non-Jesus follower	Philo's Nephew Alexander
(5) Jesus follower	Paul (e.g., Dunn, Sanders)
Non-Judean	
Jewish	
(6) Non-Jesus-Follower	Herod, Izates, Aseneth
(7) Jesus follower	Rom's audience (e.g., Haugh)
Non-Jewish	
(8) Non-Jesus-Follower	Nero, Seneca, Pontius Pilate
(9) Jesus follower	Communities in Corinth and Galatia Rom's Audience (e.g, Dunn, Jewett)

In my system, proselytes to Judaism are classified as Jews – so Herod, and the audience for Rom, for example. My categorization would not be accepted by all scholars. In particular, the identity of Paul and of the audience for Romans, whether they are Jewish or non-Jewish is a matter for resolution in this dissertation. I have included a parenthetical comment of a proponent of each of the contested positions.

In this dissertation, I focus most attention on the four odd numbered (3, 5, 7, and 9) categories, categorizing Jesus followers as Judean and non-Judean, Jewish and non-Jewish. The Apostle Peter is the universally accepted archetype of category 3, a “Judean Jewish Jesus follower.” Later, I argue that Paul is also in this category, but many scholars argue that following his “conversion,” Paul would no longer be considered a Jew. I will

explain in chs. 3 and 4 why I place James D. G. Dunn and E. P. Sanders in this category 5.

I argue that the implied audience for Rom is composed of non-Judeans who follow Jesus within the religion of Judaism: non-Judean, Jewish, Jesus followers (category 7). Paul, as the missionary to the non-Judean nations, formed communities in Corinth and Galatia of “non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers” (category 9). In Rom 9 Paul laments the number of “Judean, Jewish, non-Jesus- followers” (category 8) who do not accept Jesus as the Christ, Messiah.

Why Not “Gentile” and “Godfearer”?

I avoid use of the term “Gentile” in this work (except when used by scholars I quote). I find the term at once too ambiguous – does it refer to a person’s country of origin only or also to a person’s religious practices – and too simplistic in its use – often writers simply assume that a non-Judean is also a (perhaps former) follower of traditional religious practices. In the latter case, the term precludes the notion of a convert to Judaism retaining any identifying characteristics of the former life. In this construct, Sammy Davis Jr. lost his “blackness” when he converted to Judaism. Clearly *that* didn’t happen. While my terminology may be “clunkier,” I believe that it carries greater precision.

In my view, the term “Godfearer” is even less helpful. It is assumed that “Godfearers” are non-Judean non-Jews, generally believed to be in some way attracted to Judaism but without completing conversion. Impetus to use this terminology comes first from Acts’ two references to “those fearing God” (13:16, 26): “devout and charitable

gentiles, familiar with Scripture and obedient to the ‘ethical commandments’.”⁶⁶ In *The Beginning of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, Shaye Cohen included the classic “Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew.”⁶⁷ There, he set out seven “forms of behavior by which a gentile demonstrates respect for Judaism” in antiquity:

1. Admiring some aspect of Judaism;
2. Acknowledging the power of the God of the Jews;
3. Benefiting the Jews or being conspicuously friendly to Jews;
4. Practicing some or many of the rituals of the Jews;
5. Venerating the God of the Jews and denying or ignoring all other gods;
6. Joining the Jewish community; and
7. Converting to Judaism and “Becoming a Jew.”⁶⁸

Which one or combination of these behaviors indicate a Godfearer? Would an uncircumcised non-Judean politician who serves as a patron for a synagogue (Cohen’s third behavior) be classed as a “Godfearer”?⁶⁹ Following Cohen, Pervo expresses scepticism about the value of this term, commenting that in Acts

The label “God-Fearer” could be applied to any whom Jews viewed as supportive, whether for political, humanitarian, religious, or other motives, . . . [T]he “God-Fearers” serve Luke as a literary device. They are low-hanging fruit whose openness to the Christian message is a foil to the general obstinacy of “the Jews.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Pervo, *Acts*, 332.

⁶⁷ Cohen, *Beginnng*, 140-74.

⁶⁸ Cohen, *Beginnng*, 141-56.

⁶⁹ Cohen, *Beginnng*, 146.

⁷⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 333-34.

We are to understand that the Godfearers accept some but not all of the practices of Judaism.⁷¹ Indeed, the term God-fearer may have had some particular meaning to Luke, but the problem is that all strains of Jesus followers at the time of Paul (and, for that matter, practically all strains of Christianity in the 21st century) at a minimum admire and read the Hebrew scriptures (behaviors 1 and 4), while acknowledging the power of and venerating the God of the Jews (behaviors 2 and 5). Some also follow the Jewish practice of observing a Sabbath on Saturday (and many are circumcised, though not necessarily for religious reasons). By definition, then, all Jesus followers and all contemporary Christians are Godfearers; the term has lost its descriptive power. In my system, all Jesus followers were Godfearers, but not all Jesus followers were Jews.

Translations of Ἰουδαῖος and ἔθνος in This Work

I previously noted Johnson Hodge's lament over the lack of a single term to translate Ἰουδαῖος. Her full comment: any English word "should be multivalent, complex, context-dependent and it should include various facets of self-understanding: religious practices, geographic homeland, shared history, ethical codes, common ancestry, stories of origin, theological positions."⁷² Certainly a single term would be helpful in most cases, but in translating Rom, I choose to use the term "Jew" to translate the term Ἰουδαῖος as designating one who follows the Law. My decision is based on the context of Romans.

⁷¹ In Pervo's picturesque language, "God-Fearers long for the sausage promised by the prophets without the harsh casing of Torah." Pervo, *Acts*, 334.

⁷² Johnson Hodge, *If Sons*, 17.

Ἰουδαῖος, certainly applying to a group of people (designated by ethnogeographical and/or ethnoreligious features), is always used to separate “them” from “us,” just as calling a person a Roman automatically distinguishes her from all other Mediterranean people. Paul uses the term 11 times in Rom, seven in explicit comparisons with either Ἕλλην (5 times) or ἔθνος (twice),⁷³ and three in implicit comparison with other groups.⁷⁴ In all of the explicit comparisons, Paul is speaking of the relation of Torah followers and others to the God of Israel. Thus at 1:16 Paul writes “for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to each one who is faithful, Jew [Ἰουδαίῳ] first and then Greek [Ἕλληνι].” At 2:10 he writes “But there is glory and honor and peace to each one doing good. Jew first and also Greek.” Verses 2:28-29 have an indirect comparison: “For a person is not a Jew [Ἰουδαῖος] who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart” (NRSV). In these verses, Paul is distinguishing between false and real Jews, but both are in contrast to those who are not circumcised, either in heart or body.

This decision to translate Ἰουδαῖος as “Jew” is complicated, but not negated, by the presence in Rome (and elsewhere) of non-Judean Jews. Paul, I will argue, recognizes that non-Judeans who converted to Judaism and follow Jesus are Jewish Jesus followers. Their understanding of Jesus as the Christ is a tenet held within the Religion of Israel; they are still Jews. They are, however, a special class of Jews, proselytes. As a

⁷³ Comparison with Ἕλλην: 1:16; 2:9; 2:10; 3:9; 10:12. Comparison with ἔθνος: 3:29; 9:24.

⁷⁴ Implicit comparison: 2:28; 2:29; 3:1.

consequence, Paul writes to them as non-Judeans (e.g., 11:13: “Now I am speaking to you non-Judeans [ἔθνεσιν]”). By the time the audience heard 11:13, they would have long since realized that Paul does indeed consider them to be Jews (e.g., 7:1 “Do you not know, brothers, *for I speak to ones knowing the law*, that the law rules over a human as long as the human lives?”). For the purpose of translating Ἰουδαῖος, nonetheless, the proper term in Rom is “Jew.”

In Rom, the translation of ἔθνος is somewhat more convoluted. At 3:29, Paul writes

ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἔθνων; ναὶ καὶ ἔθνων . . .

The sense of the verse is not difficult to perceive: God is not limited to Jews only, but is also God for others. Indeed, in 1:18-29 Paul has already argued that the divine wrath is visited on all those who do not worship the God of Israel. The complication comes from the fact that some non-Judeans, whom one might expect to be referred to as ἔθνη, are Jews (as I argue for the implied audience in Rom), some are non-Jewish Jesus followers (e.g., Galatians), some have no religious practices (e.g., Epicureans), and the majority probably are practitioners of other traditional religions (e.g., worshippers of the Roman gods Jupiter, Mars, etc.). As I showed above, the reference in 11:13 is to non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. The reference in 2:14, on the other hand, (“For whenever the ἔθνη not possessing the Law do the things of the Law, they, though not having the Law to themselves are the Law.”) appears to be to non-Judean, non-Jewish non-Jesus followers. As a consequence, when the term ἔθνη appears, it must be translated within its

context. In Rom, this is often understood to be non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers and will be so translated.

The Purpose of Paul's Letter to the Romans

As Peter Stuhlmacher observed, “The more clearly the exegete can demonstrate why Paul wrote Romans and what his purpose was, the better modern readers will be able to come to grips with it.”⁷⁵ Indeed, one may take a step further: discerning the purpose of the letter constitutes the first and perhaps most crucial step in understanding the letter. It is inevitable that the exegete faces a hermeneutical circle at this point: while the purpose can be discerned only from a close reading of the letter itself, this understanding of the purpose also forms the entry point for analyses of the letter. As a consequence, throughout my work I refer often to the purpose of the letter, testing my subsequent analyses against this setting.

For this work, I follow many scholars in concluding that Paul wrote to secure the assistance of his audience in delivering the collection for Jerusalem and a subsequent new missionary venture in Spain (15:22-31). This constitutes an attempt by Paul to exercise a leadership role within the communities of Roman Jesus followers. In order to establish his leadership within a community he had never met, Paul wrote to establish a common identity with the Romans. I discuss each of these elements – seeking support for missionary activities, exercising leadership, and establishing a common social identity – in subsections in this section.

⁷⁵ Peter Stuhlmacher, “The Purpose of Romans,” in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; Peabody Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 231-42, here 231.

Paul Wrote to Secure Support and to Establish Unity with the Romans

While there is currently general support for the proposition that Paul wrote on the occasion of his missions to Jerusalem and Spain, it has been a relatively recent development. The fourth century exegete Ambrosiaster in one of the early commentaries on Rom, argued that Paul wrote to correct the beliefs of “Roman Christians” who had received the gospel from “Jewish Christians” and not from any of the apostles.⁷⁶ From this rationale, it was not far for the idea that Rom represented a theological statement, indeed Paul’s theological master statement, meant to educate not only the Romans but all Christians. In his lectures on Rom in 1515-1516 . Martin Luther began with the comment:

The whole purpose and intention of the apostle in this epistle is to break down all righteousness and wisdom of our own, to point out again those sins and foolish practices . . . whose existence we did not recognize on account of that kind of righteousness, to blow them up and to magnify them (that is, to cause them to be recognized as still in existence and as numerous and serious), and thus to show that for breaking them down Christ and His righteousness are needed for us. . . . For in the presence of God this is not the way, that a person becomes righteous by doing works of righteousness (as the foolish Jews, Gentiles, and all other self-righteous people proudly think), but he who has been made righteous does works of righteousness . . .⁷⁷

Luther’s interpretation of Paul’s intention as showing that the righteousness of God and Christ make the individual Christian righteous would be the dominant reading of Rom for over four centuries, though some movement from the strict “Lutheran view” can be discerned. Writing early in the last century, William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, for example, looked to Rom 1 for Paul’s purpose:

⁷⁶ Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians* (ACT; eds. T. C. Oden and G. L. Bray; trans. G. L. Bray; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 1.

⁷⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (ed. H. C. Oswald; trans. W. G. Tillmans and J. A. O. Preus; 55 vols.; vol. 25; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1972), 3.

. . . the most powerful of all the influences that have shaped the contents of the Epistle is the experience of the writer. The main object that he has in view is really not far to seek. When he thought of visiting Rome his desire was to “have some fruit” there, as in the rest of the Gentile world [1.13]. He longed to impart to the Roman Christians some “spiritual gift,” such as he knew that he had the power of imparting [1:11; 15:29]. By this he meant the effect of his own personal presence, but the gift was one that could be exercised also in absence. He has exercised it by this letter . . .⁷⁸

In this view, Paul’s own person is a gift to the community, one having fruit.

In 1963 Krister Stendahl published “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” in which he challenged the dominant Lutheran interpretation that Romans was about personal justification by faith.⁷⁹ Stendahl traced Luther’s interpretation back to the changing interests and problems of the Western medieval Church, and in particular its concerns about personal salvation. Stendahl notes that “It is in response to *their* question, ‘How can I find a gracious God?’ that Paul’s words about a justification in Christ by faith, and without the works of the Law, appear as the liberating and saving answer.”⁸⁰ Stendahl contrasted this personal, introspective viewpoint to the early Church’s understanding of Paul.

. . . up to the time of Augustine the Church was by and large under the impression that Paul dealt with those issues with which he actually deals: 1) What happens to the Law (the Torah, the actual Law of Moses . . .) when the Messiah has come? 2) What are the ramifications of the Messiah’s arrival for the relation between Jews and Gentiles? . . . Where Paul was concerned about the possibility for Gentiles to be included in the messianic community, his statements are now read as answers

⁷⁸ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902), xliii.

⁷⁹ Krister Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 78-96.

⁸⁰ Stendahl, “Paul and the Introspective Conscience,” 83.

to the quest for assurance about man's salvation out of a common human predicament.⁸¹

This essay, scarcely 6,000 words long, proved a paradigm shift for many scholars and provided subsequent scholarship the room to read the letter afresh.

While the Lutheran interpretation of the purpose of Rom still has able supporters, there is now growing support for the proposition that Paul wrote not a theological tract but a letter seeking help.⁸² Important contemporary commentators believe that Paul wrote to secure help but in order to secure this support needed first needed to address rifts among the Roman Jesus followers.⁸³ In his commentary, Jewett wrote that he understood

Romans as intended to elicit support for a mission to the "barbarians" in Spain, which would only be credible if the churches in Rome ceased their imperialistic competition with one another under the premise that the gospel of impartial grace shatters all claims of superior status or theology.⁸⁴

George Smiga prepared a structural analysis of Rom to explain how Paul connects the long "teaching" section of Rom (1:18-11:36) with Paul's requests for assistance in ch.

⁸¹ Stendahl, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience", 84, 86.

⁸² Stephen Westerholm, for example, is an articulate, thoughtful contemporary advocate for the "Lutheran view" that Paul wrote to persuade his audience that "Sinners find approval by grace, through faith not by anything they do." Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 445.

⁸³ Paul Minear: Paul "wanted to solicit united support for his dangerous mission to Jerusalem and for his later mission to Spain. . . .before such united support would be possible, the separate Christian groups in Rome must rise above their hostility towards one another." Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Letter to the Romans* (Naperville Ill.: A. R. Allenson, 1971), 5-6. Largely so Cranfield as well. Charles E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 2.814-23. James D. G. Dunn, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Philip Esler cite support for his mission, explication of his gospel and healing divisions, especially between "Gentile and Jewish Christians." James D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 1.lv-lviii. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; vol. 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 79-80. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 30-39.

⁸⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, xv.

15. Smiga concluded that indeed Paul had two purposes: to urge the Romans to “express [Paul’s] gospel through a united life” (12:1-2) and to “support Paul in his need in Jerusalem.”⁸⁵

There is, therefore, a growing opinion that Paul wrote to secure assistance from Roman Jesus followers which required that the Jesus followers resolve rifts among themselves that otherwise might diminish their ability to assist him. I accept the first part of this description but not the second. That is, I agree that Paul wrote to secure support for his missionary activities but I find no credible evidence that there were divisions among the Jesus followers.

As to divisions within the community, I note that in the major teaching section, 1:18-11:36, there are no observations of division among the Roman Jesus followers. Several important commentators see the teaching about clean and unclean food and days to worship in Rom 14 and 15 as proof of conflict between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus’ followers. I discuss this in ch. 3 below, concluding that the evidence for such an “ethnic” conflict is tenuous and susceptible of much more satisfying readings. Many commentators look to the so-called Edict of Claudius for external evidence of a division within the Roman Jesus followers. In ch. 2 I explain why I find this Edict no reason to postulate a “parting of the ways.” I do grant that at 3:8 (and probably 1:16) Paul acknowledges those who dispute the validity of his gospel. I read the bulk of the letter as demonstrating that Paul’s gospel is compatible, not with the arguments of his opponents,

⁸⁵ George Smiga, “Romans 12:1-2 and 15:30-32 and the Occasion of the Letter to the Romans,” *CBQ* 53, no. 2 (1991): 257-73, here 272.

but with the gospel into which the Jesus followers have been baptized. This is the subject of chs. 3 and 4 below.

Paul's Search for Unity *with* the Romans *for* His Needs Understood as Bid for Leadership

While I dispute the relevance of evidence of the need to establish unity among the Roman Jesus followers, there is ample evidence that *Paul wishes to be unified with* them. Paul's high regard for and desire to share time, prayer, and spiritual fruits with the Roman community are the persistent theme in 1:8-15. The request in 12:1-2 is for a common understanding of the will of God, and in 12:4-8 for a common recognition of the different gifts given to each "of us," Roman Jesus followers and Paul included. I see no compelling reason to read 12:1-2 as a call for unity *among* the Romans, therefore, but Paul is seeking unity *with* the Romans.

Attributing a desire for personal unity with the Romans to Paul helps understand why Paul positioned his request for help at essentially the end of the letter. Social identity theory supports Paul's tactic to first establish unity with the audience before seeking their assistance. In his effort to persuade the Romans to change their beliefs about him, and then to act on those new beliefs to support his mission, Paul is trying to exercise leadership of the community. Esler describes leadership as "[t]he process of influencing others in a manner that enhances their contribution to the realization of group goals."⁸⁶ While not usually as precise as is Esler, essentially every exegete agrees that Paul wanted the audience to change some attitude or to do something: perhaps change the way they

⁸⁶ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 33. Here, Esler quotes S. Alexander Haslam, *Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach* (Thousand Oaks Calif.: Sage, 2001), 58.

treated others, or to support Paul's agenda, his proposed mission to Spain or his gift to Jerusalem, or a combination of things. In Esler's words, Paul is writing to persuade the Roman communities of Jesus followers that he is one of their leaders, that his goals are compatible with theirs, and, as a consequence, they are to adopt as a group goal the support of his activities.

The exercise of leadership, however, is a complex group process, involving the development and maintenance of trust between leader and followers and mutual exchanges of benefits, all premised on a common social identity of the leader and the followers.⁸⁷ Michael Hogg stresses that "followers look to their leaders to mould, transform, and express who they are, their identity. Being perceived to be 'one of us' can often facilitate leadership."⁸⁸ With the evidence of Pauline detractors in Rome, development of trust could be viewed as difficult. To secure assistance from the Roman Jesus followers, then, Paul demonstrates a common identity with the community, convinces the members that his gospel is compatible with their own, and shows how his non-Judean non-Jewish communities are called to be Jesus followers expressly as non-Judean non-Jews.

Summarizing Paul's purpose for writing, I conclude that Paul was writing to the Roman Jesus followers to secure their assistance in his missionary activity. In that regard,

⁸⁷ Michael A. Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles* (eds. A. W. Kruglanski and E. T. Higgins; New York: Guilford, 2007), 716-33.

⁸⁸ Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," 728. In an earlier work, Hogg and Abrams stressed that the leader is "the prototype or most stereotypical" of the group. Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988), 114.

Paul is writing to secure a leadership position in the community. If Paul is seeking leadership to secure his audience's assistance, then when reading the letter the initial stance should be that Paul is making every effort to ingratiate himself with the audience in order to lead them to support his projects. We would expect to see Paul writing to convince the audience in Rome that his values are their values, not to correct the audience but to affirm them. After all, Paul's goal with Rom is not to correct behaviors, as in Gal or the Corinthian correspondence, but to secure a benefit from the recipient, as in the letter to Philemon.⁸⁹

Throughout chs. 3 and 4, I discuss how Paul attempts to exercise leadership of the community he addresses. Implicit in that discussion are the benefits that the community in Rome may expect, from the letter and from supporting Paul's mission. What, in other words, was Paul offering to the audience in exchange for their accepting Paul as a leader? Here, I provide a brief recapitulation of those benefits that constituted "encouragement" to Paul's audience (Rom 1:12).

First of all, as I discuss with regard to the Jewish stereotype of the idolatrous, fornicating non-Judean non-Jew, the very use of this stereotype tends to enhance the self-image of all Jews, non-Judean and Judean, itself a psychic benefit and implicit encouragement and validation of Jewish stereotyping. At the same time, by explaining

⁸⁹ Peter Lampe suggests something similar to my formulation, writing that Paul desired "to win the Romans as *allies* who pray for him and for resolution of his problems in the east. . ." Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (trans. M. Steinhauser; Minneapolis Minn.: Fortress, 2003 First German edition 1989), 71. Thomas Tobin has a similar conclusion even closer to mine: "If Paul expected to be received cordially by the Roman Christians and to be supported by them on his journey to Spain, he first had to persuade them of the truth of his gospel and to dispel the deep misgivings they were bound to have about him and his gospel." Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 99.

why his communities do not fit this stereotype, Paul reduces the fear within the community of Roman non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers towards the Pauline communities of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. That in itself is a benefit to the letter's recipients. These benefits point to an overarching benefit to the audience, the explicit acknowledgment by Paul of the continued value of Jewish practices among Jewish Jesus followers (for example, Rom 3:1-2). While I do not see in Rom evidence of opposition to such practices, the fact that the apostle to non-Judean non-Jews recognizes their validity would have continuing precedential value to the Roman community.

Related to this last point is the fact that by writing to Rome, Paul acknowledges the special status and influence of that community. It is a compliment to the community that, even though Paul has never visited and the Romans have practices different from those of the typical Pauline community, Paul looks to them for support and assistance.

The Audience of Romans

The primary argument in this dissertation and its first contribution to the field is my assertion that the implied audience in Paul's Letter to the Romans is composed of non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. Therefore, to provide perspective on the import of my claim, in this section I will provide a brief survey and critique of the scholarly views on the audience question.

As with the debate over Paul's reasons for writing Rom, the question of audience has evoked intense scholarly interest for decades. A part of the debate concerns what each scholar intends by the term "audience." As set out at the start of this chapter, I mean the implied audience, the audience the reader can discern from the text itself. Put another

way, it is the audience that the author pictures mentally when fashioning an argument and may be deduced from the language, contents, and style of the text. In his work, Stowers is insistent that it is this audience (his terminology, the “encoded audience”) and this audience alone to which the contemporary reader has access: the audience which actually heard the text, the historic or empirical audience is essentially unknowable.⁹⁰ I believe that it is my responsibility to demonstrate that my rhetorical reconstruction of the implied audience, which I take to be composed of non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers, is also an historically plausible reconstruction, that it is plausible that such a community existed in Rome. Many scholars implicitly follow this latter strategy; Stowers’ work emphasizes the necessity, however, of carefully distinguishing the historical and rhetorical analysis.

Referring back to my original list of nine possible categories for the audience, the five alternatives are: (a) Judean, Jewish Jesus followers, (b) Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, (c) non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers (my hypothesis), (d) non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, or (e) a mixture of these groups. The hypothesis that the audience of Rom can be considered category (b), Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, has no significant proponents and will not be discussed further.⁹¹ My own hypothesis is the subject of explication and analysis in this work and similarly will not be discussed further here. The other three are summarized in the following pages starting with the option

⁹⁰ Stowers, *Rereading*, 22-34.

⁹¹ Minear admits the possibility that there were such Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers but includes them in a group of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers who do not accept Jewish restrictions on diet and festal days. Minear, *Obedience of Faith*, 11.

enjoying the most support among scholars, some form of (e), that Paul is writing to a mixed audience.

Mixed Audience: non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus Followers and Judean, Jewish Jesus Followers

A straw poll among Pauline scholars in 2013 probably would conclude that Rom is addressed to a “mixed audience,” usually portrayed as “Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians.”⁹² By these categories I understand writers to mean non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers and Judean Jewish Jesus followers respectively. As to the relative numbers of Jews and non-Jews, defining the overall characteristic of the audience, most scholars offer no guidance. Cranfield, for example, concludes that “What is quite certain is that both the Jewish-Christian, and the Gentile-Christian, elements were considerable: it was clearly not a matter of an overwhelming majority and a tiny minority.”⁹³ Others are simply silent on this point.

In ch. 3 I go to great length to demonstrate that Paul’s rhetorical strategy is directed to a Jewish audience, though Paul often refers to the audience as non-Judean (e.g., Rom 1:5). While I use a model which holds that one can be *both* non-Judean *and* Jewish, scholars of the “mixed audience” camp implicitly believe that two distinct groups must be involved. For these scholars, to be non-Judean is to be non-Jewish, and to be

⁹² So, in historical order of publication, Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, xxxi-xxxiv. Minear, *Obedience of Faith*. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.16-21. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.xliv-liv. Byrne, *Romans*, 11-12. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 76. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 111-20. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 44-46. Jewett, *Romans*, 60-61, 71-72.

⁹³ Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.21.

Judean is to be Jewish. To be Christian is to take on a new religious identity and eradicate any former identity.

Audience of Judean, Jewish Jesus followers

Of the five possible audiences enumerated above, we are left with two hypotheses competing with mine: the audience is composed of either Judean, Jewish Jesus followers or non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. Compared with the majority opinion of a mixed audience, few scholars today maintain that Paul wrote exclusively to an audience of Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. Ferdinand C. Baur, in the mid-19th century, and Francis Watson have described the Roman community of Jesus followers as mixed between “Gentile and Jewish Christians,” but that Paul wrote Rom mainly to the Jewish elements of the audience. Baur wrote:

I think we are entitled to take it for granted that the section of the Roman Church to which the Epistle is addressed, must have been the preponderant element in the Church; and if this be so, then the Church consisted mainly of Jewish Christians. This is what we might have expected; for the early existence of a Roman Church is traceable simply to the large number of Jewish residents in Rome.⁹⁴

Baur recognized the probability of a fraction of non-Jews in the audience, but argued that the audience would have been most clearly identified as Jewish Christians.

Watson comes to a position similar to Baur’s, arguing that there are two congregations in Rome, one Jewish and one Gentile, and Paul is writing primarily to the Jewish congregation.⁹⁵ Another contemporary scholar Steve Mason reads the bulk of

⁹⁴ Baur, *Paul*, 1.331.

⁹⁵ Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007). Esler appears to say that different parts of Rom were prepared with different segments of the audience in mind, particularly chs. 9-11 concerning the position of Jewish non-Jesus-followers in the divine economy. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 273.

Rom as an argument against the belief systems of Judean Jewish Jesus followers. Any references to non-Judeans in the letter are tangential and must not take precedence over the bulk of the letter.⁹⁶

Audience of Non-Judean, Non-Jewish Jesus Followers

The remaining option, that Paul wrote to an audience of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, represents a minority opinion, but one growing in number and influence. In general, these scholars refer to the rhetoric of Rom itself to identify the “encoded” audience, that is, the audience identified solely by the text itself. Walter Schmithals, writing in 1975, suggested that “Gentile Christians,” former “Godfearers” originally attracted to Judaism, were Paul’s audience.⁹⁷ To demonstrate this, Schmithals cited key passages in Rom (viz., 1:5, 13-15; 11:13) to demonstrate the non-Judean audience.⁹⁸

Like Schmithals, Stowers concentrates on the audience that can be discerned from the text itself. Stowers emphasizes that he will concentrate his reading on the encoded explicit reader (“the audience manifest in the text”) and the encoded implicit reader (“what scholars call the ideal or competent reader”), as opposed to the empirical reader (the ones who actually read the letter in Rome).⁹⁹ He has carefully and creatively read Rom as a work addressed to “godfearers,” defined as “gentiles who observed certain

⁹⁶ Steve Mason, “‘For I am not Ashamed of the Gospel’ (Rom. 1.16): The Gospel and the First Readers of Romans,” in *Gospel in Paul* (eds. L. A. Jervis and P. Richardson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 254-87.

⁹⁷ Walter Schmithals, *Der Romerbrief als historisches Problem* (SNT; Gutersloh: Gutersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1975).

⁹⁸ Schmithals, *Problem*, 10.

⁹⁹ Stowers, *Rereading*, 21.

practices of the law selectively and who maintained a degree of association with a Jewish community while remaining gentile;” “Gentiles” are the “ethnic-religious other of Jews.”¹⁰⁰ Eisenbaum agrees with Stowers’ identification of the audience of Rom as “Gentile godfearers.”¹⁰¹

Philip Esler takes Stowers, and others who rely exclusively on such a methodology, to task for not acknowledging the data on audience ethnicity provided in Rom 16.

Let us imagine the scene . . . when Paul’s letter was first read . . . before a group . . . [that] includes such eminent Judeans as Prisca and Aquila, or perhaps Andronicus and Junia . . . Some of them . . . are on very close terms with Paul, and he obviously intended that they would hear the letter read. . . . Are we to suppose that very early in the reading . . . these Judeans must have realized, and Paul intended them to realize, that he only had non-Judean Christ-followers within the scope of his discourse and not them? . . . Did they then sit or stand patiently for over an hour while the letter was read, all the while saying to themselves . . . “Very interesting, but of course Paul did not intend this teaching for us. . . .”¹⁰²

Above I offered my criticism of the categories “Gentile” and “godfearer,” as terms simply too vague to be useful in modern scholarship. Here I wish to focus on many scholars’ tendency to equate ethnoreligious and ethnogeographic identities, so that Judeans are Jews, anyone not a Judean is not a Jew, or anyone who is a Jew is a Judean. For example, Stowers comments “When the high priest was the nation’s ruler and the Roman emperor was the *pontifex maximus* and the law of the Judean people was their

¹⁰⁰ Stowers, *Rereading*, 34, 71-72.

¹⁰¹ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 216-19.

¹⁰² Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 119.

sacred writings it is easy to see that religion, politics, and ethnicity are inseparable.”¹⁰³ This equation of nationality and religion is a point of view with much merit and a large following.

In my reconstruction of the audience, I dispute Stowers’ assertion of the equivalence of ethnogeographic and ethnoreligious identities. I do not accept that a non-Judean became a Judean after initiation into Judaism. In the process of converting to Judaism, a non-Judean became a non-Judean Jew. I do so because, first of all, by Paul’s time, transnational cults had developed which spanned geographic and national boundaries, loosening the ties between ethnoreligious and ethnogeographic identities. Besides the empirical question of the impact of these cults, there is the foundational theoretical question about multiple identities, the very fluidity of identity which Stowers et al. seem to ignore.

As to the first point, I would grant that when Paul wrote most nations included in their notional identity the worship of particular deities, tied to the success of the people and their government. But not all religions were similarly tied to specific nations. A process that decoupled geography and “religion” had begun several centuries earlier. Arthur D. Nock described how the conquest of Greek and Asian city states by Philipp and Alexander led to widespread psychological and philosophical unease with the traditional civic cults.¹⁰⁴ As these Greek kingdoms and later the Roman empire grew stronger,

¹⁰³ Stowers, *Rereading*, 27. Also Fredriksen’s comment earlier, “. . . ‘religion’ ran in the blood.” Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’?,” 39.

¹⁰⁴ Nock, *Conversion*, 99-102.

autonomy among the conquered peoples diminished with an inevitable split between the gods of the people and the administration of the polity. Above I quoted Stowers on a time when the Jewish high priest was the nation's ruler, Caesar high priest in Rome, and the law of the land was Scripture. If this time ever occurred, it was not when Paul wrote. In the first century, the controlling law of the Judean people was not their sacred scriptures but Roman law. Judea was an occupied country. It is true that under the sufferance of the Romans, Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora were able to follow many of the provisions of the Law, but on such matters as the occupation of Palestine by Roman troops, taxation, or administration of the death penalty Judean Jews were subject to Roman law. Jewish Law had been decoupled from the civil, criminal, and international legal provisions under which Jews lived.

Nock observed that with the loss of civic (and personal) autonomy, people turned first to astrology as a means of understanding one's fate and later, in reaction to the loss of human control implicit in astrology, the development of cults honoring gods who could help overcome one's fate.¹⁰⁵ In this process, some religious cults became concerned with the personal needs of devotees, not just the needs of the state. The widespread cult of the healer Aesclepius is one manifestation of the adoption of the belief in gods' power to improve one's lot. Not only was this process precipitated by the imposition of empires (first Hellenistic, later Roman), it was facilitated through the same empires as they insured the relatively free movement of people, materials, and ideas. The cults from the

¹⁰⁵ Nock, *Conversion*, 101-02.

East inevitably made their way over the trade routes throughout the Roman Empire, and to Rome itself.¹⁰⁶

Mary Beard *et al.* emphasize the role of local, traditional nationalistic cults but go on to describe transnational “elective” cults:

Other cults, however, were ‘elective’ – in the sense that they were open either to any individual who chose to join, or at least to those who satisfied some basic qualification for membership (such as a particular profession – or, in the case of the Mithraic cult, were male).¹⁰⁷

In addition to the cults of Isis and Mithras, Beard *et al.* discuss Judaism as well as the cults of Magna Mater (from the second century C.E.), and Jupiter Dolichenus (probably from Syria).¹⁰⁸ They find the attraction of these cults in a strong sense of community driving towards “a strong religious identity through strictly controlled rules of behaviour” with “new statuses and new ways of life that may have started within the walls of the sanctuary but extended outside these walls too.”¹⁰⁹ They identified those attracted to these cults as those most attuned to improving their way of life, of moving up in the Roman society (for example, freedmen).¹¹⁰ But the lower levels of society were not the only ones attracted to such cults. Beard *et al.* point out that the Eleusinian mysteries, “included nocturnal secret rites” normally discouraged by the conquering Romans, but rather than oppressing them “many Romans, including Augustus and other emperors,

¹⁰⁶Nock, *Conversion*, 48-49, 66-67.

¹⁰⁷ Mary Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.272.

¹⁰⁸ Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.272-76.

¹⁰⁹ Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.287-89.

¹¹⁰ Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.291-301.

were themselves initiated at Eleusis.”¹¹¹ Indeed, the Emperor Claudius promoted (with mixed success) the Eleusinian mysteries in Italy, bringing the Greek mystery religion to the metropolis.¹¹² No one would question the continued “Romanness” of Augustus and Claudius even after their initiation into the mysteries.

The consequence of this history is that when Paul wrote there had been a significant decoupling of ethnoreligious and ethnogeographic identities across the social spectrum. These findings support the notion that in antiquity as in the contemporary world persons could access multiple identities. In his commentary on Rom, Esler emphasizes the ability of individuals to do exactly that.¹¹³ He can thus speak of Atomos (A.J. 20.142) as a “Cyprian and Judean.”¹¹⁴ Esler takes the elements of ethnicity from the work of John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith who identify one aspect of “ethnicity” as “a common culture, embracing such things as customs, language, and religion.”¹¹⁵ Religion is *one* and not necessarily the most important element in determining ethnicity

¹¹¹ Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.223.

¹¹² Vincent M. Scramuzza, *The Emperor Claudius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), 155. Arnaldo Momigliano, *Claudius, The Emperor and His Achievement* (trans. W. D. Hogarth; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961), 28.

¹¹³ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 49-50, 60.

¹¹⁴ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 73-74.

¹¹⁵ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 43-44. Esler cites John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, “Introduction,” in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3-14. The other elements are “a common proper name to identify the group; a myth of common ancestry . . . ; a shared history or shared memories of a common past, including heroes, events, and their commemoration; . . . a link with a homeland, either through actual occupation or . . . symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples; and a sense of communal solidarity.”

(and no single element is a *sine qua non* of ethnicity).¹¹⁶ While Esler admits the possibility of multiple ethnic identities, his work treats only of “Gentile Christians” and “Judean Christians.” That is, non-Judeans and Judeans can both follow Jesus, but the implication must be that if a non-Judean takes on Judaism, even though “religion is not the most important element in determining ethnicity,” the absence of any non-Judeans in Esler’s audience who are also Jews, suggests that the conversion transforms the individual from non-Judean to Judean.

The notion of multiple identities, accessed at various times as the situation may require, emphasizes the inherent fluidity of any identity. I will show in ch. 2 that conversions to Judaism from other traditional religions might be expected to have occurred in Rome among the immigrants who lived cheek by jowl with Judean Jews, generally fitting Beard *et al.*’s description of those attracted to the “elective cults.” The typical non-Judean, Jewish Jesus follower, then would be bearing with her at least traces of an original identity tied to the place of birth, particulars of her birth family, and the family cults, along with elements from her profession, status in Rome, and religious affiliations. Jeremy Schott, writing of Christian and Pagan identity in the late Empire, concludes that “Constructions of ethnic identity, like cultural, constitutional, and religious identities, emerge out of the crucible of social conflict and competition.”¹¹⁷ As I construct the implied audience for Rom, it is inevitably a simplified version of what in

¹¹⁶ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 44.

¹¹⁷ Jeremy M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (DRLAR; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 9.

reality must have been a heterogeneous composition. My objective, however, is not to reconstruct the actual audience that heard Phoebe read the letter, but the audience which Paul constructed in his rhetoric.

While Paul would have welcomed these converts to Judaism, I will show in the same ch. 2 that he would not be expected to refer to them in the same way that he referred to “cradle” Judean Jews. Hence, references in Rom to a *non-Judean* audience are not incoherent with a *Jewish* audience. Paul and other writers in antiquity were as aware of the distinction between ethnicity and religion as we are today. Just as contemporary writers can refer to the late Sammy Davis Jr. as an African-American Jew, and call citizens of Israel Ashkenazi or Sephardic Jews (denoting these Jews’ place of geographic origin along with their religious affiliation) so Paul could acknowledge the ethnogeographic diversity of the audience in Rome.

Nanos’ Reconstruction of Audience

One must acknowledge that some scholarly arguments do not fit into these neat categories. Mark Nanos has presented a fascinating and provocative reading of Rom in which he claims that Paul wrote to dissuade some segment of the “*gentilizing* Christians” from improper behavior. Nanos argues that some non-Judean, *non-Jewish* Jesus followers (his “Christian gentiles”) are attempting to persuade non-Judean, *Jewish*, Jesus followers (also “Christian gentiles”) to leave their Jewish practices. Paul urges the Jewish Jesus followers to remember their obligation to continue to obey the Jewish rules of behavior

they had already embraced when they first believed.”¹¹⁸ While Nanos is quite clear that the letter is addressed exclusively to non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers (using my categories) it is also possible that there are Judean Jewish Jesus followers in the same communities, since Paul’s addressees “are still meeting in the synagogues of Rome and . . . are considered part of the Jewish community(s) as ‘righteous gentiles’.”¹¹⁹

Nanos shares with Ambrosiaster a conviction that Paul is correcting the mistaken beliefs of non-Judean followers, though the errors they identify are diametrically opposed: while Ambrosiaster believes Paul writes to correct their overly-Jewish ways, Nanos believes Paul is correcting their “Gentilizing” of Jews.¹²⁰ Like Baur, Watson, and Esler, Nanos segments the community of Roman Jesus’ followers into Jewish and non-Jewish sub-groups, and reads Rom as directed to a particular segment of the Jesus’ following community. While Baur and Watson, however, find Paul writing to “Jewish Christians,” Nanos believes he is writing to “Christian gentiles” concerning “Christian gentiles” who have adopted the practices of Judaism. Nanos separates himself from Stowers (whose use of the category “godfearers” leaves open the possibility of the audience continuing to participate in the synagogue) with the explicit categorization of his audience as non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers who are still within the synagogue (“Christian Jewish Gentiles” perhaps). Against essentially virtually all contemporary

¹¹⁸ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis Minn: Fortress Press, 1996), 14. Italics in original.

¹¹⁹ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 14.

¹²⁰ Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries*, 1.

scholars, Nanos' defines the purpose of Romans as correcting the false anti-Jewish teaching of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers ("Christian gentiles").

Recapitulation of My Reading of Rom

My goal in the next three chapters is to construct and defend a distinctive reading of Rom. A key to that reading is my identification of the audience as non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. The letter is addressed, in other words, to an audience composed of Jesus followers who are not Jews by birth but by later affiliation. In comparison with other scholars, this identification of the audience stands furthest from those who see Paul resolving differences between non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers and Judean Jewish Jesus followers. This would include most especially Baur, Das, Dunn, Fitzmyer, and those who follow them. While my reconstruction shares some features with Nanos, I believe that Paul is writing not to correct others' gospels, but to correct misconceptions about his own. In comparison with Stowers and others who see the letter addressed to non-Judeans, my reading offers a helpful nuance to their position, namely that this audience is also Jewish.

Moving Forward

In this chapter, I have provided an orientation to the remainder of this work, by stressing my thesis and exploring critical underlying assumptions: the text I will be studying, my terminology, my understanding of why Paul wrote Rom, and how my reconstruction of the implied audience relates to that of other scholars. My purpose has been to help the reader understand how these concepts will be used in the remainder of this work, in part by situating them within the current scholarly discourse.

Humility in the face of the immense body of scholarship on Romans is the only proper stance for one entering the conversation. Let me say here that I do not intend to say, despite all of my strongly affirmative statements hereto and hereafter, that my reading of Rom is the only one possible. On the contrary, throughout this work, I use the terms “probable,” “plausible,” “likely” and their opposites, “improbable,” “implausible,” and “unlikely.” Scholars of the history of the first Jesus followers are dealing with an impossibly small fraction of the total population of the Roman Empire. The literature left by this group is fragmentary, episodic, and tendentious. The chroniclers whose accounts have survived to contemporary times ignored the earliest movement as of no account within the greater history of Rome and its people. To deal with the levels of uncertainty, Daniel Patte provided a helpful categorization of readings of ancient texts:

. . . “*legitimate*” interpretations (that are appropriately grounded in the text), “*plausible*” interpretations (that make sense, because their theological and hermeneutical arguments are coherent), and “*valid*” interpretations (that have a positive value according to an ethical assessment of its effect in concrete contexts).¹²¹

Patte argues that there may be many legitimate, plausible, and valid readings.¹²² It is my contention that the reading developed in the remainder of this work is just such a one.

¹²¹ Daniel Patte, “Three Types of Identity Formation for Paul as Servant of Christ Jesus in Romans,” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation* (eds. K. Ehrensperger and J. B. Tucker; LNTS; London and New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 209-28, here 211.

¹²² Patte, “Three Types of Identity Formation,” 211.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ROMAN COMMUNITY OF JESUS FOLLOWERS

Throughout this work, I recognize that the audience to whom Paul writes is best identified through a close reading of Rom. As discussed earlier, it is the encoded and implicit audience with which I am most concerned. It is, however, necessary that the reconstruction of the implicit audience be compatible with the historical record as that record can be known. Thus, many scholars relate their reading of a “Gentile Christian” audience to a particular interpretation of imperial events in the 40’s culminating in an Edict of Claudius that precipitated a split between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers. I reject this reconstruction and instead argue that the implied audience to whom Paul wrote was non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers – persons who were not “cradle Jews” but later converted to Judaism and within Judaism became Jesus followers.

In approaching this task, I am mindful of three criteria A. J. Wedderburn enunciated for constructing a plausible audience for Rom:

- (1) Is the situation presupposed inherently plausible? Does it provide a coherent picture of the life of the Christian community in that place?
- (2) Is this picture compatible with what we know from other sources concerning the history of the earliest church? Is it similar to anything else we know happened elsewhere in the church of that day?
- (3) Does it fit in with what Paul's text says? Does it make good sense of that text?¹²³

¹²³ Wedderburn acknowledges that while the more “our proffered reconstructions square with these three criteria the more plausible they must be reckoned to be, . . . it will always remain a matter of greater or

Wedderburn's criteria helpfully frame the historical and rhetorical questions involved in establishing a plausible audience. Wedderburn's first two historical questions will be addressed in this chapter and the third is the task of the next two chapters.

Foundational to my work is a proper understanding of important characteristics of the community of Jews in Rome. It is to this community that non-Judeans came to become Jews and within this community that the first communities of Jesus followers grew. To organize a vast amount of material, I will focus on three ancient writers: Philo of Alexandria, Marcus Tullius Cicero, and Flavius Josephus. Each wrote something about the Jews in Rome and, as I will show, they covered distinct elements of the community's experience. Their writings will serve as a stepping stone for working with other primary and secondary sources.

Having established a common understanding of the community of Roman Judeans, I turn to the conversion of non-Judeans to Judaism. Here I use modern theories of conversion to understand the distinction between a full conversion to a new religious tradition and the adoption of specific practices and beliefs within a religious tradition. I submit that non-Judeans would have experienced the former on their conversion to Judaism and the latter on their adoption of Jesus as Messiah within Judaism. The evidence for other similar communities of Jesus followers makes this construction more plausible.

lesser plausibility, and nothing more." A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1988), 64.

A majority of commentators on Rom ascribe a fissure in the Roman community of Jesus followers between non-Jewish and Jewish members to a Claudian decree in 49 C.E. banishing from Rome Judean Jewish Jesus followers. As a consequence, the community of Jesus followers became increasingly “Gentile,” and even antagonistic to Judean Jewish Jesus followers. When writing Rom, Paul envisioned an audience of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers, contrary to my hypothesis of Jewish Jesus followers. I refute this reconstruction in the last section of this chapter.

The Judean Population of Rome

Philo of Alexandria on the Judeans in Rome

Philo of Alexandria came to Rome in 39 C.E. as part of a delegation from Alexandria to the Emperor Gaius seeking redress from the oppression by rioting Egyptians who were tacitly supported by the local Roman magistrate. The essay *Legation ad Gaium* recounts this experience and provides a verbal snapshot of the Roman Judean community 15 to 20 years before Paul wrote his letter. Philo described the Roman Judeans as poor, with the bulk of the community residing in the Transtiberium quarter, across the river Tiber from the heart of Rome (*Legat.* 155).¹²⁴ Philo records that the Judeans were citizens descended from slaves brought to Rome by Pompey after his conquest of Judea in 60 B.C.E. (*Legat.* 155). The people attended synagogues, there cultivating their national philosophy (*Legat.* 156).

¹²⁴ Philo, *Works* (LCL; trans. F. H. Colson; 10 vols.; Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1962).

Modern scholarship has confirmed Philo's observations and deepened the understanding of their implication. Peter Lampe used a variety of resources to identify the areas in Rome in which Jews were most likely to have lived. He agreed that indeed Transtiberium had a large Jewish population.¹²⁵ Caesar Augustus had divided the city into fourteen administrative quarters, and, as in most large cities, each quarter took on a specific social identity. Lampe describes the fourteenth, Transtiberium, as the transit point for goods coming up the Tiber from the ocean port of Ostia. Ready access to imported goods attracted ancillary industries and their employees: millers, ivory carvers, cabinet makers and potters, along with businesses associated with animal slaughter, including tanners, knackers, and butchers. Lampe has concluded Transtiberium was the most densely populated quarter in Rome, with a majority of the population housed in wooden tenements of four to five stories, and the lowest concentration of *domus*, larger homes occupied by one family.¹²⁶ The area seems to have attracted a sizable number of migrants from the East, serving as it did as the transfer point for goods and travelers coming to Rome.¹²⁷ The quality of the housing, preponderance of immigrants, and the proximity of noisome industries suggest that the residents of Transtiberium were also among the poorest in Rome.

Lampe found that, besides Transtiberium, the Aventine Hill, immediately across the Tiber from Transtiberium, and the Porta Capena, adjacent to the Aventine in the

¹²⁵ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 40.

¹²⁶ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 50-54.

¹²⁷ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 55.

Southeast “suburbs” of Rome, also had large Jewish populations.¹²⁸ Prior to 49 C.E, all three areas were outside the pomerium, the traditional Roman city limits *outside of which* worship of foreign gods was permitted, adding to their attraction for immigrants. I find the history of the Aventine particularly intriguing because of its traditional affiliation with Prisca and Aquila. The church of St. Priscilla now stands about half way up the Aventine, on the site of a 2nd or 3rd century church. Since Priscilla/Prisca and Aquila were companions of Paul (Acts 18, Rom 16, and 1 Cor 16), the history of the area could have an influence on the interpretation of the texts relevant to them.

The Aventine’s early character of a place for the masses, changed when the emperors reserved the neighboring Palatine Hill to themselves, forcing the aristocracy to move off, further south, particularly to the Aventine. When in 36 C.E. a fire destroyed much of the building on the Aventine, the rich took the opportunity to build major homes there, pushing the poor down the hill into the marshy areas.¹²⁹ The upshot was that in 49 C.E., Claudius confirmed the success of the urban gentrification program by including the Aventine within the *pomerium*. The Aventine, once hospitable to Jews, now became (technically) out-of-bounds for the practice of their religion.

Philo describes the majority of the Roman Judeans as descendants of slaves transported to Rome by Pompey around 61 B.C.E., but there is literary evidence of Judeans even earlier. First Maccabees records two delegations sent by the Maccabees to Rome to establish and maintain Judea’s status as a “friend and ally of Rome” (1 Macc 8

¹²⁸ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 40.

¹²⁹ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 58-59.

and 12). Maximus Valerius, writing in the first century C.E, records an order in 139 B.C.E. by the praetor Cn. Cornelius Hispanus (an official charged with regulation of foreigners and their religions) expelling astrologers (for duping the people) and the Judeans “who had tried to infect Roman customs by the worship of Jupiter Sabazius” (*Memorable deeds* 1.3.3).¹³⁰ The note is sufficiently cryptic that one may understand the Judeans to be either permanent residents or emissaries, commercial or diplomatic, on a mission to Rome.

It is certain, in any event, that when Pompey returned from his conquest of Palestine in 61 B.C.E. he brought with him Judean slaves. Most of these Pompeian-era slaves (and their descendants) probably were freed in due time, some ransomed by other Judeans but many manumitted by their masters.¹³¹ Manumission would not have been unusual, for it was customary for Roman slaves to be emancipated after a period of time or on the death of the slave owner.¹³² Thus slavery was customarily a temporary condition.¹³³

¹³⁰ Cited in Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 3-4.

¹³¹ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 4.

¹³² That Jews were poor even several generations after manumission is not contradictory. The process of manumission ordinarily resulted in the freedperson being in a patron-client relationship with the former master, with consequent financial and other responsibilities sufficient to keep the freedmen in a state of financial stress. Since most wealth was provided by ownership of farms, the urban proletariat had few opportunities to create and retain much wealth. Nor was manumission always benign. Masters might free an elderly or disabled slave to relieve avoid financial responsibility for the now unproductive slave. These hazards were well illustrated when, in a much later period, a Christian woman wishing to renounce her great wealth freed 8,000 of her slaves with their consent, but her other slaves preferred to become the slaves of her relatives. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 61. Cited in Credo Reference <http://0-www.credoreference.com.bianca.penlib.du/entry/hupla/manumission> . Accessed July 5, 2012.

David Balch cautions against drawing a portrait of a Roman population highly segregated by economic status. Relying on archaeological studies of Pompeii and Herculaneum, he draws a picture of a

During the Republic, manumission conferred Roman citizenship on the manumitted slave.¹³⁴ The citizen had the right to live in Rome unless convicted of a crime, to enter a legally recognized marriage, to vote, and to receive the corn dole.¹³⁵ In Philo's comment that Augustus would arrange for distribution of the dole on days other than the Sabbath, Philo offers confirmation that the Jews held citizenship. Because of the political and fiscal implications of citizenship, emperors gradually restricted the practice of and benefits from manumission. Despite these efforts assuming the bulk of Judeans were descendants of mid-first century B.C.E. slaves, they would have been Roman citizens by the time of Philo and Paul, just as Philo reports (*Legat.* 155).¹³⁶

society in which the wealthy lived in *domus* physically connected with the public facilities and artisans surrounding them. Balch quotes Andrew Wallace-Hadrill on the social interaction common in these cities: "The ghettos of the sub-proletariat, typical of the heavily industrialized cities, like Turin or Chicago, have never existed in our city. In Naples, the working class lived in the basements, the nobles on the so-called 'primo piano nobile' and the bourgeoisie on the upper floors. This social stratification of a vertical type has obviously favored cultural exchanges between the classes . . ." Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 141-42, quoted in David L. Balch, *Roman Domestic Art and Early House Churches* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 48. Peter Oakes makes a very similar point, detailing the varied socio-economic inhabitants of an *insula* in Pompey that encompassed the homes and businesses of a small tavern and a cabinet maker, abutting the large house of the Menander. Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (London and Minneapolis: SPCK and Fortress, 2009), 1-45. While the insight Balch, Wallace-Hadrill, and Oakes provide is valuable, the extent to which the findings from towns with populations of perhaps 25,000 may be extrapolated to a true city of at least 600,000 has to be questioned.

¹³³ David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2000), 11.

¹³⁴ "All manumission is, at any rate during the Republic, the making of a *civis*" [citizen]. W. W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 439. J. Albert Harril, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (HUT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 53-56. Michael Grant, *A Social History of Greece and Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 114-16.

¹³⁵ Noy, *Foreigners*, 23.

¹³⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 55. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 18. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.xlv.

In my work, establishing citizenship for Judeans is important because the Roman police powers were unable summarily and arbitrarily to expel from Rome citizens, as they could non-citizens, but instead the authorities needed to proceed through the Roman judicial process.¹³⁷ It thus appears likely that the Jews of Rome were protected from sudden expulsions.¹³⁸

The resulting portrait of Roman Judeans from Philo, confirmed by modern scholarship is of a poor community, living in an area that is described as the ancient equivalent of the “Back of the Yards” neighborhood of 1950’s Chicago: rough, lower class, afflicted periodically with the noisome aromas of the meat packing industry, and living cheek by jowl with recent immigrants. Close contacts with non-Judeans, while often irksome, would be important for the affiliation of non-Jews first with Judaism and then with the community of Jesus followers. Further, Philo’s statement that the Judeans were citizens confirms that they were protected from the sort of arbitrary expulsion to which their immigrant neighbors could be subjected.

Cicero on the Judeans’ Politics and Religion

Cicero’s discussion of Judeans in 59 B.C.E., several decades before Philo arrived in Rome, demonstrates that Roman Judeans, while conquered and poor, could still have some impact on the political life of Rome. Acting as defense counsel in a trial of a former

¹³⁷ Noy, *Foreigners*, 24. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 84. Noy goes on to note “In practice, there was probably much less security from the whim of an emperor or magistrate than legal theory would suggest.” Noy, *Foreigners*, 29, n. 62.

¹³⁸ There is also a real question about the impact of any expulsion. If the expelled were simply to stay outside the boundaries of the city of Rome, for example, the net effect might be an added inconvenience but hardly a major hardship. Tacitus comments on an expulsion of the astrologers under Claudius that was “stringent but ineffectual” (*Ann.* XII.52).

provincial magistrate, Cicero spoke in a stage whisper about the crowd of Judeans at the trial of his client Flacco, accused of embezzling funds, including the Temple Tax, while governor of Asia (*Flac.* 66).¹³⁹ Cicero's comments displayed attitudes indicative of the general view of Judaism:

Every city, Laelius, has its own religious observances and we have ours. Even when Jerusalem was still standing and the [Judeans] at peace with us, the demands of their religion were incompatible with the majesty of our Empire, the dignity of our name and the institutions of our ancestors; and now that the [Judean] nation has shown by armed rebellion what are its feelings for our rule, they are even more so; how dear it [the Judean nation] was to the immortal gods has been shown by the fact that it has been conquered, farmed out to the tax-collectors and enslaved. (*Flac.* 69 [MacDonald, LCL]).

Cicero here conflates religion and imperial politics: Jewish religion cannot be efficacious if the participants have been conquered. As to the “demands of the religion,” Cicero does not enlighten us as to what he thought they were. For now, we may assume that the reference was to one or more of the three best known markers of a Jew: male circumcision, abstention from certain foods, and observation of the Sabbath.¹⁴⁰

Cicero depicts the Roman Judeans as a vast, close knit throng, with influence in public meetings. He accuses the prosecutor, Laelius, of holding the trial near the Aurelian steps in order to attract a crowd of Judeans (66). Bilhah Wardy points out that the *infirma plebs*, the weak and foolish lower class citizens, congregated precisely at the Aurelian steps.¹⁴¹ Wardy goes on to unpack the implications of Cicero's claim that the Judeans

¹³⁹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Collected Works* (LCL; trans. C. MacDonald; 28 vols.; Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

¹⁴⁰ See Juvenal's comments below.

¹⁴¹ Bilhah Wardy, “Jewish Religion in Pagan Literature during the Late Republic and Early Empire,” in ANRW (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 610.

“on occasion set our public meetings ablaze” (67). Public meetings were supposed to be the setting for deciding proposals from magistrates. While the observers were supposed to be silent and simply vote yes or no, opponents of Cicero’s *optimates* party, notably Julius Caesar at this time, availed themselves of the opportunity for organizing the plebs for their political goals.¹⁴² A year after the trial of Flaccus, Cicero described a meeting when first Pompey, speaking for the *optimates*, and then Clodius, for the *populares*, were raucously heckled by opponents. In the end, a full scale battle broke out between the two sides (*Quint. frat. II.3.2*).¹⁴³ It is to such an environment of polarized, dysfunctional politics that Cicero here alludes and it is clear that Cicero believes that the Judeans were active participants in that environment. I discuss below how, a century after these street fights, the emperor Claudius acted against all private associations (*collegia*) including the Judeans and their assemblies as a part of his program to assert and solidify his power after the assassination of Gaius.

How did Cicero characterize the Judeans then? They are a defeated people forsaken by the gods, still observing religious practices incompatible with the dignity of the Roman Empire. In Rome, the Judeans are among the “weak and foolish” plebs, courted by Julius Caesar and the *populares*. Despite their humble status – or perhaps because of it – the Roman Judeans maintained solidarity with the Jerusalem temple and so could be roused by a charge of defalcation of its finances. A connection with the

¹⁴² P. A. Brunt, “The Roman Mob,” in *Studies in Ancient Society* (ed. M. I. Finley; PaP; London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 74-102.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Brunt, “Mob”, 74-75.

Jerusalem temple was also reported by Philo in his comments on the reaction of the Roman Judeans to the reports of Gaius' efforts to erect a statue to himself in the temple (*Lega* 186-88).

Flavius Josephus on the Status of Judeans

In his works on Judean history, Flavius Josephus concerned himself with the imperial politics in which the Judeans found themselves. Like most subjects of Rome, Judeans enjoyed the right to practice their traditional way of life.¹⁴⁴ In *A.J.* XIV, Josephus gathered the decrees and rulings of Julius Caesar concerning Jews that, he argued, demonstrated the good status of the Jews.¹⁴⁵ In this account, Caesar couched the conferral of customary rights on Judea in the context of the Judeans' support for him in the civil war with Pompey. Around 44 B.C.E., Caesar appointed Hyrcanus ethnarch and high priest, designated him and his sons "allies . . . and particular friends," conferred on them the right to settle any questions concerning the "Jews' manner of life" (*A.J.* XIV. 192-95), declared that no taxes would be collected in the Sabbatical year (202), and forbade quartering regular troops among the Judeans and the conscription of auxiliary troops from them (203-4). Later, Julius Caesar confirmed the right of the Judeans of Delos to observe "their national customs and sacred rites" as they did "even in Rome" including permission to collect contributions and hold common meals (213-214). Of note here, Josephus recounts that Caesar permitted the Judeans to assemble but not certain other

¹⁴⁴ Miriam Pucci ben Zeev, "Caesar and Jewish Law," *RB* 102, no. 1 (1995): 28-37, here 33.

¹⁴⁵ In view of Josephus' polemical agenda, the authenticity of these documents has been questioned in the past. Ben Zeev addressed the issues and made a convincing argument for Josephus' credibility. See Zeev, "Caesar and Jewish Law," 29.

eastern cults. These provisions were confirmed by Caesar Augustus (*A.J.* XVI. 162-165, 172). Philo reports independently that Caesar Augustus permitted the Roman Jews to collect and send the Temple Tax to Jerusalem and arranged for the distribution of the monthly dole of money and corn to be distributed to the Jews following the Sabbath, whenever the distribution normally fell on that day (*Legat.* 153, 158). Over the ensuing years and decades, the Roman imperial authority generally confirmed these rights, not only with regards to the inhabitants of Rome but in the provinces as well.¹⁴⁶

Josephus was anxious to record the close familial association between the Herodians in Judea and the Julians in Rome. Herod the Great sent two of his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, to Rome to present themselves to Caesar Augustus for their education. Josephus reports they had permission to stay with Caesar himself (*A.J.* XV 342-43).¹⁴⁷ In the next generation, Aristobulus' son was named for Octavian's general Agrippa and educated in Rome with the future emperor Tiberius. Because of Agrippa's closeness to the royal family, Philo credits him with persuading Gaius to forego his scheme to erect a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple (*Legat.* 261-333). All of these contacts lend credibility to Harry Leon's statement that it became fashionable for the aristocrats to adopt certain Jewish customs, particularly Sabbath observance and restricted diet, and reports of the conversions to Judaism among the upper classes in

¹⁴⁶ Zeev, "Caesar and Jewish Law," 31. Distribution of the corn dole to the Jews is further evidence of their status as citizens of Rome.

¹⁴⁷ Alexander and Aristobulus may have been conferred these "honors" as hostages to the good conduct of their father. Noy briefly traces the practice of taking official hostages and later the practice of "members of the ruling families of client states being brought up at Rome and eventually sent back home, as (it was hoped) pro-Roman rulers." Noy, *Foreigners*, 106. At times, the distinction between an hostage and a student must have been blurry.

Rome.¹⁴⁸ These would include that of the noblewoman Fulvia; Nero's wife the Empress Poppaea; and both Flavius Clemens, cousin of the Emperor Domitian, and his wife, Flavia Domtilla, the Emperor's niece, late in the first century C.E.¹⁴⁹

Judeans, therefore, at least from the time of the dictatorship of Julius Caesar, were recognized as a distinct population with common rights recognized around the Empire. Roman emphasis on legal precedents, as in the case of the Judeans in Delos (and, as I shall point out, in the resolution of the Alexandrian anti-Judean riots) provided some degree of assurance that Judeans would not be subject to arbitrary actions by the authorities. The influence exerted by Agrippa in the dispute with Gaius displays a level of interpersonal solidarity at the highest levels of the Judean and the Roman nobilities.

Summary of Selected Sources on Judeans in Rome

Philo, Cicero, and Josephus present complementary portraits of the Judean population of Rome. By the time Paul wrote, many Judeans could claim their families' had sojourned in Rome for a century or more. While their ancestors may have originally been brought to Rome as slaves, most Judeans had since obtained both their manumission and their citizenship. Although most Judeans continued to live in poverty, they represented a potentially active and effective political force. Further, the highest level of Judean nobility, the ruling class in Roman Palestine, maneuvered at the highest level of the Roman Imperial household. Both the poor and the nobles among the Judeans had

¹⁴⁸ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 250-51.

¹⁴⁹ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 251-52.

daily contact with non-Judeans. Both also exhibited a loyalty to the institutions of Judaism.

Conversions to Judaism

In the preceding section, I have deliberately referred to the “Judeans of Rome,” not the “Jews of Rome.” This is to respect the distinction I wish to draw between those with geographic ties to Judea (and ancient Israel as well), to whom I refer as Judeans, and those who practiced Judaism, or Jews. In this section, I discuss the conversion of non-Judeans to the religion of Israel, thus becoming non-Judean Jews. What is the evidence we have of converts? Who would have been attracted to Judaism? How would this conversion have been understood by their new co-religionists?

The answers to these questions are important. For there to have been a community of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers first I must demonstrate that the existence of non-Judean Jews is plausible. The acknowledgment of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah by non-Judean or Judean Jews would not have been experienced as a change of religion but as a move within the Religion of Israel – perhaps like a move from being a Pharisee to being a Zealot. This religious history would be very different from that of Paul’s community in Galatia who apparently went from a traditional, polytheistic religion to being Jesus followers without the intermediate step of becoming a Jew; the difference in their religious history should be reflected in Paul’s writings. In this section, I develop the theoretical background to understand this difference and the terminology to express it.

Were There Converts?

Based on the reconstruction of the community of Jews in Rome, it would be understandable to expect that no one would convert to their religion. After all, as Cicero said, it was the religion of a conquered people, who were crammed into poor, crowded sectors of the metropolis. But contrary to that expectation, there is epigraphic and literary evidence of conversions. Leon cited the presence of seven proselytes in one Roman catacomb, five women and two men.¹⁵⁰

Despite the reduced status of the Jews living in Rome (descendants of slaves from a defeated nation), the literary record supports the practice of conversion. The religion of the Jews did evoke respect. Menahem Stern attributes the earliest preserved comment on the Jews by a Greek or Latin author to Theophrastus (4th century B.C.E.) who commended the Jews' reluctance for living sacrifices (*De Pietate*).¹⁵¹ Josephus and Origen quote Hermippus of Smyrna (c. 200 B.C.E.) in the latter's *de Pythagora* as claiming that Pythagoras took his philosophy from the Jews in Syria (*C. Ap* I.162-65; *Cels.* I.15:334).¹⁵² Augustine of Hippo quotes the Roman philosopher Varro (1st century B.C.E.) praising the Jews for worshipping without the use of images, a practice Varro claims the ancient Romans had followed for 170 years (*de Civ. Dei* IV.31).¹⁵³ Writing around the

¹⁵⁰ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 253-54.

¹⁵¹ Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974--1984), 1.10.

¹⁵² Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1.93.

¹⁵³ Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1.209-10.

turn of the first century, both Strabo (*Geog.* XVI.2:34-36) and Livy (*Scholia in Lucanum* II.593) also comment approvingly on the Jews' practice of aniconic monotheism.¹⁵⁴

The literary evidence also includes narratives of conversion among the higher classes: the noble woman Fulvia; the Empress Poppaea, wife of Nero; Flavius Clemens, cousin of the Emperor Domitian, and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, the Emperor's niece.¹⁵⁵ Horace, writing in the late first century B.C.E., threatened his interlocutor either to be persuaded or to face his band who "like the Jews, will compel you to make you one of our throng" (*Sermones* I, 4:143).¹⁵⁶ In the second century C.E., Cassius Dio called Jews all those who "affect their customs," suggesting that Dio knew of "aliens," non-Judeans who had become Jews (*Hist.* 37.16:5).¹⁵⁷

Impediments to Conversion

Even though there was some admiration for elements of Judaism, converts to Judaism nevertheless could face opprobrium for their conversion. Roman writers routinely disparaged the practices of circumcision, Sabbath rest, and abstention from pork.¹⁵⁸ Juvenal's remarks (early 2nd century) neatly summarize these hostile attitudes.

¹⁵⁴ Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1.299, 330.

¹⁵⁵ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 251-52.

¹⁵⁶ Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1.323.

¹⁵⁷ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* (trans. E. Cary; LCL: 9 vols.; vol. 7; Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955).

¹⁵⁸ On circumcision, Horace, *Serm.* I.960; Ptolemy *Historia Herodis*, Apion, in Josephus, *C. Ap.*, II.137; Martial, *Epigrammata*, VII.30, 82. Found in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, I.321, 56, 415, 525, 26. On the Sabbath, Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I.75-80, 413-416; *Remedia Amoris* 217-220; Seneca, *De Superstitione* in Augustine, *de Civ. Dei* VI.11; Petronius, *Frag.* 37; Frontius, *Strategemata*, II, 1:17. Found in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 348, 431, 44, 510. On abstention from pork, Apion, in Josephus, *C. Ap.* II.137; Seneca,

Some who have had a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens, and see no difference between eating swine's flesh, from which their father abstained, and that of man; and in time they take to circumcision. Having been wont to flout the laws of Rome, they learn and practise and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses handed down in his secret tome, forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites, and conducting none but the circumcised to the desired fountain. For all which the father was to blame, who gave up every seventh day to idleness, keeping it apart from all the concerns of life. (*Sat.*XIV.96 [Ramsay, LCL])

In this quotation, Juvenal displays a good grasp (perhaps surprisingly good grasp) of things Jewish. He comments disparagingly on the major markers of Jews for Romans: observance of the Sabbath, abstention from pork, and circumcision. In addition, Juvenal knows that Moses produced works Jews study, revere, and refer to as “law.” His knowledge confirms that Jews, whether Judeans or non-Judeans who practiced Judaism, were visible and noteworthy to the Roman educated class. Juvenal’s comment “conducting none but the circumcised to the desired fountain” may refer either to “all that Moses handed down” or, intriguingly, to the Jewish initiation rite of baptism.¹⁵⁹ If the latter, Juvenal’s remarks raise the possibility that Paul’s references to baptism in Rom 6 are to the Jewish initiatory rites rather than the baptism of Jesus followers.

In addition to the social stigmas, converts to Judaism would face pressure, implicit and explicit, from the Roman political authorities. Throughout their history, the Romans prided themselves on their personal and national piety, particularly as expressed in their public worship of the traditional gods. Because the authorities deemed proper

Ep. CVIII.22; Petronius claims that Jews worship pigs, *Frag.* 37; Plutarch, *Quaest. Con.* IV.5.2. Found in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, I.415, 434, 444, 555-56.

¹⁵⁹ Sandmel quotes the Talmudic passage, *Yebam.* 47a-b, on the initiation rituals. Samuel Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 232-33.

public honoring of the gods necessary for the continued well-being of the city and the Empire, the force of the state stood behind public worship.¹⁶⁰ Cicero attributed the Romans' success in conquering other peoples not to any innate superiority in arms but to their piety (*Nat. d.* II.iii.8-9). Writing a generation later, shortly after the conclusion of the civil wars, Horace, from another perspective confirmed Cicero's belief. He claimed the destruction from those wars, as well as military defeats at the hands of the Parthians, were the consequence of neglect of the gods and their temples (*Odes* 3.6). The urge to honor the gods who protected the city of Rome was so powerful that Romans continued to do so for at least a century beyond the establishment of Christianity as the official and only legitimate religion.¹⁶¹

While the Romans were faithful to their traditional gods, they were quite willing to bring more gods into their service. Thus, in the rite of *evocatio*, Roman generals would bargain with the gods of enemy peoples, promising to transport the gods back to Rome to

¹⁶⁰ James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1993), 41. Ramsay MacMullen identifies four characteristics of the traditional religion:

... the acknowledgment of innumerable superhuman beings, the expectation that they were benevolent and would respond kindly to prayer ... the belief that some one or few of these beings presided especially over each place and people, and a substratum of rites addressing life's hopes and fears without appeal to any one being in particular.

Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 32.

¹⁶¹ Beard *et al.* describe the continuation of the rite of Lupercalia to at least 495 C.E. in an effort to preserve the safety and prosperity of Rome. Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.ix. In *Christianity and Paganism*, MacMullen addresses the persistence of traditional practices for centuries after the decrees of Constantine: "... there remained quite contradictory practices and events to be noticed from time to time post-312, post-400, indeed for many centuries to come, showing the ... national religion still stubbornly alive." MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 3.

be honored there if the gods would change allegiances to favor the Romans.¹⁶² Caesar Augustus was in this tradition when he built a temple to the Greek god Apollo in the Roman Forum in honor of his victory at Actium. For the Romans, the more gods the better.

The Romans' extension of their respect to the religions of their subject peoples stopped when and if the foreign religions were considered a threat to the continued practice of the state religion. Beard *et al.* quote Cassius Dio from the second century who constructed an imaginary speech from Maenaea to Octavius in 29 B.C.E. on religious practice.

If you truly desire to become immortal . . . not only must you yourself worship the divine everywhere and in every way according to ancestral custom and force everyone else to honour it; but you must also reject and punish those who make some foreign innovation in its worship, not only for the sake of the gods (since anyone despising them will not honour anyone else), but also because such people who introduce new deities persuade many people to change their ways, leading to conspiracies, revolts, and factions, which are most unsuitable for a monarchy. (*Hist.* 52.36.1-3 [Cary, LCL]).¹⁶³

Dio makes explicit the dangerous linkage between changing *religious* practices and changing *political* practices that may well have prompted government action against “foreign religions,” including Judaism.

One might expect, therefore, that worship of the Jewish God by Jews would have been suppressed by the authorities if they saw a danger from the practice. As we have seen, Maximus Valerius cited an “expulsion” from Rome in 139 B.C.E., purportedly as a

¹⁶² Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.34. John S. Kloppenborg, “*Evocatio Deorum* and the Date of Mark,” *JBL* 124, no. 3 (2005): 434-41.

¹⁶³ Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome*, 1.214.

consequence of their religious practices.¹⁶⁴ More than a century later, in 19 C.E., Tiberius conscripted 4,000 Judean males of military age and sent them to the inhospitable climes of Sardinia (Josephus *A.J.* XVIII. 3.5.81-4; see also Cassius Dio, *Historia* LVII.18.5a). In both cases, the charge against the Jews seems to have had to do with Jewish proselytizing of Romans leading to renunciation of the traditional Roman ways.

All of this suggests that affiliating with Judaism probably was considered a countercultural move. Some aspects of Judaism were highly regarded, and certain state policies even supported the practices of Jews. But the state might also threaten (for whatever reason) oppression. It was into this vulnerable community that non-Judeans entered.

Why Anyone Converts: Contemporary Theories and Ancient Evidence

In this section, I use certain contemporary theories about religious conversion to interpret narratives of conversion in antiquity. The reason I am doing this is to develop a framework for describing the conversion of non-Judeans to Judaism and any subsequent acknowledgment of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the religious history of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. This history should be very different from that experienced by Paul's own congregations in Galatia, for example, and this difference should be reflected in Paul's address to the two communities. Contemporary theories provide explanatory

¹⁶⁴ David Noy, citing the difficult textual history of the comment and the inability to make a credible reconstruction of the charges against the Jews, offers the possibility that Valerius looked back to find a precedent for actions against the Jews in his own day. Noy, *Foreigners*, 41-42. Around 155 B.C.E., or 15 years before the alleged action against the Jews, three Athenian philosopher-ambassadors were expelled from Rome for fear that they were corrupting the populace. Indeed, the expulsion of any of the practitioners of foreign religions (astrologers, Egyptians, etc.) may be explained as a means to control the populace through their religious practice rather than any particular interest in the different religious practices themselves.

power of this process. To be sure that I am not importing contemporary theory inappropriately into an ancient milieu, I compare ancient conversion narratives with these theories to test their explanatory power. I assume that the authors of the narratives described conversion in a way that they believed would be credible to their audiences. Only to the extent the contemporary theories provide insight into the conversion narratives may they be expected to provide a framework for understanding the contrasting experience of Galatian non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers and Roman non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

Modern Theories of Conversion

The sociology of knowledge explicated by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman forms the basis for the model of conversion I will use. According to Berger and Luckman, “The sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality.”¹⁶⁵ The reality that encompasses all aspects of an individual’s life and identity is the “symbolic universe.” They write:

The symbolic universe is conceived of as the matrix of *all* socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events taking place *within* this universe. What is particularly important, the marginal situations of the life of the individual

¹⁶⁵ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor, 1966), 189. Walters comments:

“Sociology of knowledge” is the common label for an approach that seeks to account phenomenologically for a community’s role in constructing reality. This approach insists that what one experiences as reality is in fact a socially constructed version of reality that depends on shared experiences of community members (characteristically these result in unstated and unrecognized assumptions) that are objectified and form an interpretive framework for integrating new data.

Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 2.

(marginal, that is, in not being included in the reality of everyday existence in society) are also encompassed by the symbolic universe.¹⁶⁶

Thus, the symbolic universe provides the context of meaning for an individual's existence. It is constructed through the process of primary socialization, "the first socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society."¹⁶⁷ In this process, the symbolic universe takes on the aspect of permanent objectivity, existing outside of the individual and the society, and is completed "when the concept of the generalized other [e.g., "*One* does not spit peas."] (and all that goes with it) has been established in the consciousness of the individual."¹⁶⁸ Primary socialization is normally undertaken by and with parents or parent figures.

Within the symbolic universe, the individual may proceed through secondary socialization, the process of "the internalization of institutional or institution-based 'subworlds.'"¹⁶⁹ Berger and Luckman generally discuss secondary socialization in the context of a "division of labor," with secondary socialization providing the individual with the knowledge and skills to perform a particular task.¹⁷⁰ Secondary socialization occurs within religions as one adopts particular practices or tenets within the "canopy" of the institution. Within ancient Judaism, secondary socialization would have been a movement from Sadducee to Pharisee, as Josephus described of himself. The

¹⁶⁶ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 96.

¹⁶⁷ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 129.

¹⁶⁸ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 137.

¹⁶⁹ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 137.

¹⁷⁰ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 137.

contemporary analogs might be a Buddhist choosing to enter a Buddhist monastery, or a Catholic diocesan priest joining the Society of Jesus religious order. In all these cases, the individual takes on a set of new practices within the overarching canopy of the home religion.

Secondary socialization leaves the symbolic universe intact, but an individual's symbolic universe may be threatened by the recognition that there is a different, alternative symbolic universe: "The appearance of an alternative symbolic universe poses a threat because its very existence demonstrates empirically that one's own universe is less than inevitable" [as in the European encounter with indigenous people in the Americas].¹⁷¹ With the recognition of an alternative symbolic universe, an individual may recognize the possibility of rejecting the current symbolic universe in favor of the alternative. If that is to happen, the individual must go through a process, "alternation," that duplicates the process of primary socialization in childhood "because they have radically to reassign reality accents and, consequently, must replicate to a considerable degree the strongly affective identification with the socializing personnel that was characteristic of childhood."¹⁷² Berger and Luckman go on to say:

A "recipe" for successful alternation has to include both social and conceptual conditions, the social, of course, serving as the matrix of the conceptual. The most important social condition is the availability of an effective plausibility structure, that is, a social base serving as the "laboratory" of transformation. This plausibility structure will be mediated to the individual by means of significant others, with whom he must establish strongly affective identification. . . . which inevitably replicates childhood experiences of emotional dependency on

¹⁷¹ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 108.

¹⁷² Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 157.

significant others. These significant others are the guides into the new reality. They represent the plausibility structure in the roles they play *vis-à-vis* the individual (roles that are typically defined explicitly in terms of their re-socializing function), and they mediate the new world to the individual.¹⁷³

Alternation, then, is as personal an experience as primary socialization itself.

One distinctive mark of alternation is a break with the past,

. . . a reinterpretation of past biography *in toto*, following the formula "Then I *thought* . . . now I *know*." Frequently this includes the retrojection into the past of present interpretative schemas (the formula for this being, "I already knew then, though in an unclear manner . . .") and motives that were not subjectively present in the past but that are now necessary for the reinterpretation of what took place then ("I *really* did this because . . ."). Prealternation biography is typically nihilated *in toto* by subsuming it under a negative category occupying a strategic position in the new legitimating apparatus: "When I was still . . ." The biographical rupture is thus identified with a cognitive separation of darkness and light.¹⁷⁴

In alternation, then, the individual repudiates the past. I need to emphasize that this repudiation contrasts sharply with the consequences of secondary socialization:

In secondary socialization the present is interpreted so as to stand in a continuous relationship with the past, with the tendency to minimize such transformations as have actually taken place. Put differently, the reality-base for re-socialization [alternation] is the present, for secondary socialization the past.¹⁷⁵

This distinction in the language of alternation and secondary socialization is important for my work, as I believe that in Gal (for example) Paul speaks of a distinct break with the past, signifying that before Paul's arrival the Galatians were practitioners of traditional religions and then became Jesus followers, while in Rom Paul demonstrates the continuity of his gospel with the beliefs and practices of Judaism. In the latter case,

¹⁷³ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 157.

¹⁷⁴ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 160.

¹⁷⁵ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 163.

then, the past serves as the “reality-base,” suggesting that the audience experienced secondary socialization rather than alternation.

Berger and Luckman consider religious conversion the prototypical “alternation.”¹⁷⁶ In his later work, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, Berger wrote

“conversion” (that is, individual “transference” into another world) is always possible in principle. This possibility increases with the degree of instability or discontinuity of the plausibility structure in question. Thus the Jew whose social ambience was limited by the confines of the ghetto was much less conversion-prone than the Jew existing in the “open societies” of modern Western countries . . . Both the theoretical measures of conversion-prevention (“apologetics” in all its forms) and their practical correlates (various procedures of “maintenance engineering” . . .) increase in complexity in such situations. Conversely, the individual who wishes to convert, and (more importantly) to “stay converted,” must engineer his social life in accordance with this purpose.¹⁷⁷

Here Berger emphasizes both the social nature of conversion and the break involved in moving from the former life to the new. Berger’s words about the movement from one world to another are echoed in Philo’s account of Moses teaching:

. . . he exhorts the old nobility to honour them [proselytes] not only with marks of respect but with special friendship and with more than ordinary good will. And surely there is good reason for this; they have left, he says their country, their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and religion (δοσιότητα). Let them not be denied another citizenship or other ties of family and friendship, and let them find places of shelter standing ready for refugees to the camp of piety. . . (*Spec. Laws* 1, XII.51 [F. H. Colson, LCL])

Philo’s words presage Berger’s analysis, urging the receiving Jewish community to offer the proselyte the friendship and social support for people who have left their previous world for a new one. Lewis Rambo’s study of the conversion process recorded

¹⁷⁶ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 157.

¹⁷⁷ Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 50-51.

the importance of personal relationships both to introduce and validate the new religion and so to provide an “environment of security that nurtures, supports, encourages, and sustains the new life of the convert.”¹⁷⁸

These depictions of conversion and its aftermath emphasize the social nature of the process, standing against what might be a more popular view of conversion as a highly personal, emotionally charged moment. If conversion is a social process, then it should be susceptible of some empirical study and confirmation. Rodney Stark and John Lofland studied the growth in the late 20th century of the Unification Church, better known as the Moonies.¹⁷⁹ Like first century Jews, the Moonies constituted a marginal, deviant group. In a later work, Stark summarized his key findings, especially that

. . . of all the people the Moonies encountered in their efforts to spread their faith, the only ones who joined were those *whose interpersonal attachments to members overwhelmed their attachments to nonmembers*. In effect, conversion is not about seeking or embracing an ideology; it is about bringing one's religious behavior into alignment with that of one's friends and family members.¹⁸⁰

Stark emphasizes that the adoption of deviant behavior (such as joining a deviant, minority religion such as Judaism) comes at a cost, principally in terms of attachments to others and the rewards that accompany those attachments.¹⁸¹ The fewer the potential

¹⁷⁸ Lewis R Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 109.

¹⁷⁹ John Lofland and Rodney Stark, “Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective,” *ASR* 30(1965): 862-75. Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, “Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects,” *AJS* 85, no. 6 (1980): 1376-95.

¹⁸⁰ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 16-17.

¹⁸¹ Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 17.

convert's existing attachments the greater the rate of deviance from the norm, the greater the willingness to "convert" to a new religion.

Stark's emphasis on networks and interpersonal relationships in the conversion process is complemented by the theories laid out in Arthur Darby Nock's classic *Conversion*. There, Nock identified the principal motive for conversion as a response to a convert's needs. I discussed earlier Nock's argument that conversions to "elective" pre-Christian cults were a response to the psychological disorientation caused by the dissolution of the societies built around city-states following the conquests by Alexander the Great and later Rome.¹⁸² Nock found early converts to Christianity were attracted not to the human aspects of Jesus' personality but to his superhuman ability to heal.¹⁸³

A sociological, network-driven model of conversion (à la Berger, Luckman and Stark) may seem incompatible with Nock's psychologically influenced model. In fact, where Stark emphasizes that the person in transition, without strong ties to a religious community, is particularly susceptible to conversion, it takes little to realize that the potential convert need not necessarily be in geographic transition to be susceptible to change. Serious illness, for instance, may destroy the individual's confidence in the inherited verities. Seen in a broader light, then, the internal pressures leading to conversion, as delineated by Nock, may describe the internal state of the individual who may then be brought into a religious network for conversion. Thomas M. Finn, writing some 60 years after Nock and with the benefit of the developments in the study of the

¹⁸² Nock, *Conversion*, 99-102.

¹⁸³ Nock, *Conversion*, 210.

sociology of religion, synthesized Nock's inclinations towards stressing psychological needs and the kind of sociological analysis that Berger and Stark proposed.¹⁸⁴ Finn included among his seven conditions for conversion "experience of an identity crisis" and "active search for a new identity, meaning, and purpose in life," along with "continual and mutual interaction with a community that embodies the new religious reality."¹⁸⁵

Based on this, we would predict that immigrants to Rome, coming as slaves or free, having weakened ties to relations, geography, language, and religion of origin – their symbolic universe from primary socialization– would be susceptible to conversion to Judaism, precipitating an identity crisis for the immigrant. A point of entry for travelers from the East was Transiberium, a major area for settlement of Judeans. The identity crisis could be resolved within a community offering a new coherent symbolic universe with supportive religious and community practices. Far from home and in close proximity with Judean Jews, the immigrants would find it natural to develop relationships with their neighbors, leading inevitably to a certain number of conversions to Judaism. This is the basis for my contention that non-Judeans in Rome might become Jewish Jesus followers.

Ancient Conversion Accounts

These theories about conversion were developed in the late 20th century, principally following observation of late 20th century Westerners. The scholar's question

¹⁸⁴ Thomas M. Finn, *From Death to Rebirth: Ritual and Conversion in Antiquity* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1997).

¹⁸⁵ Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*, 33-34.

is “With what level of confidence can these theories be applied to the first century Mediterranean world?” To provide assurance that contemporary conversion theories match that world, I have reviewed a number of conversion accounts from antiquity. I am not as concerned with the historicity of these accounts – did an Egyptian princess *really* fall in love with the Hebrew Joseph? – as I am with the events surrounding conversion, the process that the author describes. It is my assumption that the author created situations and motivations that would be credible to the audience. Can contemporary theories account for characters’ actions? Thus, in one very famous story, the personal attachment to her widowed mother-in-law Naomi drew Ruth the Moabite into leaving her people and her gods for the Judeans and their God. Whether the story is “history” or “fiction,” is not critical for my work. What is critical is that the author/editor believed that Ruth’s love for Naomi, her desire to remain with her to death, provided the author plausible motivation for Ruth’s conversion to Judaism, to accept the people and the God of Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17). We may also note that as a childless widow, Ruth’s attachments to Moab and its gods were limited to her birth family. In the narrative, however, Ruth had lived with her husband’s family for the previous ten years. In her case the costs of leaving Moab were negligible in comparison with the cost of forfeiting her relationship with Naomi.

The romance-novella *Joseph and Aseneth*, broadly dated from 100 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. depicts the convert weighing the cost and benefits of conversion.¹⁸⁶ In the story,

¹⁸⁶ This is a story of the conversion of Aseneth from a traditional Egyptian religion to Judaism. Based on language echoing Eucharistic liturgies and the absence of mention of abstention from pork and observance of the Sabbath, there is a fair probability that in its current form this work has undergone Christian

Aseneth initially rebuffs the suggestion of her father that she marry Joseph, asking “Why are you giving me to a man of another race?” (4:2).¹⁸⁷ Her rejection of the idea occurs before she beholds the blindingly handsome Prince Joseph. Love at first sight is succeeded by abject, tearful despair when Joseph rejects *her* as an idolator unworthy of a Jew. After seven days of remorseful fasting and praying to the Lord, the God of the ages, Aseneth repents her idolatry. At the conclusion of her prayer, Aseneth is visited by a “man from heaven” who (a) initiates her in the worship of the God of Joseph through the creative use of a honeycomb, (b) assures her of God’s blessing, and (c) foretells her marriage to Joseph. After several adventures, Joseph and Aseneth live happily ever after with Jacob, Joseph’s father.

Aseneth at first refuses to bear the cost of becoming a Jew in order to marry Joseph: the cost seems disproportionate to the benefit. Once she has met Joseph, however, and experienced his good looks and sweet tongue, the balance tips. As Stark might say, the cost of not converting to Joseph’s religion – losing Joseph – in the end outweighs the cost of the opprobrium to be expected from her friends and family on conversion as a consequence of her rejection of the gods of Egypt. In Philo’s words, she has left familiar “city, house, and friends.”

Berger and Luckman’s work on the importance of communities who will sustain and maintain the convert is born out in another of Stark’s conclusion: conversion occurs

redaction. On the other hand, there is no echo of the Christian baptism as an initiation rite that one might expect from a Christian editor. In either case, the novella is one illustration of a conversion process.

¹⁸⁷ Translation downloaded June 28, 2009 from Mark Goodacre, *The Aseneth Home Page* ([cited June 28 2009]); available from <http://www.markgoodacre.org/aseneth>.

through networks, when “*other things being equal, people have or develop stronger attachments to members of the group than they have to nonmembers.*”¹⁸⁸ The most famous story of a conversion from antique classical literature is Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, dated to the second century C.E. This Roman novel recounts the story of Lucius whose attempt to use magic to change into a bird goes awry and instead turns him into a jackass. Lucius is restored to his humanity and eventually raised to the priesthood of Isis through the intervention of the goddess and her priests. His ultimate adoption of a new world view and entry into a new symbolic universe is nurtured and sustained through the community of priests of Isis.

Lucius’ story illustrates another proposition of Stark’s: “*New religious movements mainly draw their converts from the ranks of the religiously inactive and discontented, and those affiliated with the most accommodated (worldly) religious communities.*”¹⁸⁹ Within Berger and Luckman’s system, these would be people with minimal grounding in a symbolic universe. Lucius himself was looking to magically transform himself. His adventures eventually brought him into contact with another symbolic universe, that of Isis. The lesson to be drawn is that one would expect the conversions to ancient Judaism to occur from among those following the religions of state, not from those deeply involved in Mithraism or Isis worship.

¹⁸⁸ Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 18, 20.

¹⁸⁹ Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 18.

These first propositions of Stark's point the scholar away from looking for a conversion to Judaism as the consequence of a formal program of proselytization.¹⁹⁰ As a demonstration of the near futility of public programs of proselytization, Stark studied the records of the practices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Mormons, in one locale. Stark found that the trademark "cold calls" by missionaries led to conversion to the LDS only 0.1 percent of the time: one success following a thousand calls. In contrast, conversions occurred about half the time when the same missionaries met with Mormon families and their non-Mormon friends within the Mormon home following a long period of building friendships.¹⁹¹ In other words, the real work of conversion takes place below the radar, in the kitchens and family rooms of the faithful.

One of Berger and Luckman's observations about "alternation" is that this is most likely – really, *only* likely – to occur when one's symbolic universe comes into contact with another symbolic universe. The very realization that another symbolic universe is possible may put cracks into the individual's commitment to the first symbolic universe. Those who travel from one culture to another are likely to experience this kind of disturbance. From antiquity comes Josephus' story of the conversion of Izates, king of Adiabene (*A.J.* XX. 17-48). In his youth, Izates was sent to Abennerigus, the king of

¹⁹⁰ Along with others, Martin Goodman finds no evidence of a Jewish missionary campaign in the Diaspora. See ch. 4, "Judaism before 100 C.E.: Proselytes and Proselytizing," in Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 60-90.

¹⁹¹ Stark and Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith," 1386-87.

Charax Spasini, lest his jealous older brothers do him harm.¹⁹² While there, the women of the royal household, having themselves converted to Judaism, introduce Izates to a Jewish merchant, Ananias, who brings Izates to Judaism. In due course, Izates' father dies, and Izates and Ananias return to Adiabene. There Izates expresses an interest in full conversion to Judaism, including circumcision, but Ananias and Izates' mother, Helena, herself a convert to Judaism, strongly counsel against the move for "if his subjects should discover that he was devoted to rites that were strange and foreign to themselves, it would produce much disaffection and they would not tolerate the rule of a Jew over them" (39). To their counsel Izates first bows, but then, after another Jewish teacher, Eleazar advises otherwise, he is circumcised to the consternation of mother and tutor. Josephus tells us, however, that God protects them all from their enemies. (48).

The conversion of Izates illustrates the impact of relocation on the commitment to a symbolic universe. The danger posed by his brothers would, in addition, reduce the strength of Izates' ties back to the homeland and its symbolic universe. Moving into a new reality, converting to a new religion, had fewer costs when the associations with the old way of life bore the hint of persecution, even death. Izates' conversion story contains many other of the elements Stark highlighted as well. Izates is brought to Judaism as much through the women of the household as through the merchant Ananias. It is they who first propose an alternative symbolic universe to the one he carried with him. With Ananias they form a community in which Izates can develop his understanding of

¹⁹² Adiabene was an ancient Assyrian, independent kingdom, in Mesopotamia. Charax Spasini, located at the head of the Persian Gulf, was the capital city of the ancient kingdom of Characene. Abennerigus reigned from 5 to 21 C.E.

Judaism. On his return home, the process of understanding, now in a community lead by Izates' mother, continues through the discernment about the necessity for and prudence of circumcision.

In Rome, the process of conversion to Judaism would have been facilitated by the the Roman Jewish synagogues, of which Leon numbered at least 11.¹⁹³ Philo wrote that the Roman Jews “had synagogues, and . . . were in the habit of visiting them, and most especially on the sacred sabbath days, when they publicly cultivate their national philosophy” (LCL *Legat.* 156; see also *Mos.* 2.215-216). Non-Judean, non-Jewish Romans would have classified a community gathering around a synagogue a *collegia*, a voluntary association typically organized around either a country of origin or an avocation for the mutual benefit of the members.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, for Jews throughout the Mediterranean world, synagogues served as both community centers and sites for

¹⁹³ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 135-66. While Leon has identified 11 synagogues, principally from epigraphic evidence on burial sites, no buildings from this period have been identified as Roman synagogues. The oldest extant synagogue in Italy is that of Ostia developed first in the 2nd century C.E. The absence of dedicated structures in Rome may be explained by the fact that construction in Rome prior to the time of the fire under Nero was primarily of wood and Jews with little or no wealth probably built any structures from wood rather than brick, stone or other more expensive materials for as long as that was possible. The downside of this practice, however, is that the structures of the poor and middling class had a lower chance of surviving fires and the wear of ages than did the temples and palaces of the wealthy. As of the writing, the only example of a Roman *insula* (or tenement as would have been common in Transtiberium) dates from the 2nd century C.E. and consists of one brick wall near the foot of the Capitoline Hill. The absence of physical evidence raises the probability that the Jewish synagogues identified were names for communities rather than the names of particular structures. Jewett, *Romans*, 57. Tessa Rajak emphasizes that Jewish life was “defined on the public level by a repertoire of actions, rather than by the continuity of permanent structures.” Tessa Rajak, “Synagogue and Community in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora,” in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (ed. J. R. Bartlett; London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 22-38, here 35. Andrew Das argues that Jews in Rome doubtless did have buildings as synagogues. A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 190-92.

¹⁹⁴ Ann Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Synagogue Communities in the Graeco-Roman Cities,” in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (ed. J. R. Bartlett; London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 55-87, especially 64-68.

religious study.¹⁹⁵ Synagogues would provide the locus of community support to assist the convert in the entry into and the maintenance of their position in the Jewish community. The immigrant, especially the immigrant from the East, would have found both the opportunity, in the person of the Jewish community, and the structure in place to effect a strong conversion.

The Myth of Judean and Jewish Exclusiveness

A prerequisite for this model of conversion to work is a meaningful, cordial interface between the Jewish community and those around them. We have seen that generally the bonds of friendship lead to conversion to a new way of life. Some commentators have argued that, to the contrary, Judeans were antagonistic to other peoples, making conversions implausible. For Andrew Das, for example, Jewish exclusivity, including “outright contempt for other deities, dietary practices, and circumcision marks . . . the Jewish community’s self-identity: Jewish separatism was a major cause of gentile hostility.”¹⁹⁶ I have referenced some of the disparaging comments of Roman writers about Jews and their practices, just as does Das. Were the Jews extraordinarily exclusivist, however, I would need to find a different model for understanding conversions to Judaism, since it would be unlikely that anyone would be attracted to Judaism.

Das’ suggestion that the Jews of Rome were antagonistic towards the larger society flies in the face of a good deal of contrary evidence. First of all, as commented,

¹⁹⁵ Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Synagogue Communities”, 68. Rajak, “Synagogue and Community”, 35.

¹⁹⁶ Das, *Solving*, 192-97, quotation at 96.

were Jews as exclusivist as Das seems to believe, there would have been no “Gentile Godfearers” or proselytes in the synagogues in the first place, including the list of nobility discussed earlier. An exclusivist community disparaging the life and mores of those around would not have been able to form those bonds. Further, it is a mark of integration and not separation that a Jewish community in Rome would want to name one synagogue for the great Caesar Augustus, deified shortly after his death and another for his leading general, Agrippa.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps as revealing of their integration into the broader society is that they were allowed to do so.

The slave origin of the Judeans in Rome also worked to put them into intimate contact with people from throughout the Empire. Since Roman households typically added slaves through purchase in the local market without regard to their original home, the result “was that people of very different geographical origins came to live and work under the same roof.”¹⁹⁸ Thus it was inevitable that the Judeans brought in slavery would have been in close contact with slaves from other regions and in a relationship that would demand cooperation.

Others also dispute the substance of Das’ assertion. Eisenbaum challenges any notion of aggressive hostility of Hellenistic Jews to the gods of their neighbors. To be sure, Jews of the period believed that the God of Israel was the supreme God and that those who worshipped other gods may have been foolish idolaters, but Eisenbaum cites both Josephus (*C. Ap.* 2.237) and Philo (*Spec.* 1.53) to the effect that, while granting the

¹⁹⁷ Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 140, 42.

¹⁹⁸ Noy, *Foreigners*, 11.

superiority of the God of Israel, Jews should be discouraged from making degrading comments about these entities.¹⁹⁹ The point of both writers is to avoid defaming the name of God, even if inadvertently.

Paula Fredriksen documents the everyday interchanges between Judeans and their surrounding communities, concluding “Jews were heavily involved in the local cities, as evidenced by their command of the ancient literature, inscriptions of Jews as members of town councils, patrons of, or observers at athletic, dramatic or musical events (such as Philo and, probably, Paul).”²⁰⁰ Furthermore, Fredriksen casts doubt that the modern notion of “monotheism” had the same connotation in antiquity that it has today. She observes

Worshipping “one god” or “the highest god” or only “our god” did not mean that one doubted the existence of other gods, only that one construed one's obligations to them differently. . . . Put differently: no ancient monotheist was like a modern monotheist, because the ancient cosmos was imagined differently from the modern, post-Renaissance, disenchanted cosmos.²⁰¹

In the world Fredriksen describes, *Jews* would be foolish to disparage the gods of their neighbors.

While Fredriksen surveyed the actions of living Judean Jews in antiquity, Leonard Rutgers, surveying burial practices, found evidence of persistent cultural interaction in

¹⁹⁹ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 73-74.

²⁰⁰ Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’?”, 43-44.

²⁰¹ Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’?”, 44,46.

Rome and elsewhere around the Mediterranean.²⁰² Rutgers' comparative analysis of the Jewish and non-Jewish catacombs demonstrated that Jewish burial practices and funerary artistic preferences closely followed those of the general public.²⁰³ Of the use of pagan themes and symbols, Rutgers commented:

Even when in Jewish contexts the choice of Classical themes seems to have been rather limited, Jews shared to an extent with the pagan "man in the street" knowledge of the Graeco-Roman pantheon with its colorful gods. They may have detested the idea of invoking these immortal pagan supermen, but when it came to artistic fashion, some Jews were receptive to what was in vogue in contemporary pagan society.²⁰⁴

Just as the Judeans are clearly known by the majority culture, as demonstrated by the many references to them in literary records, this evidence demonstrates that Jews were conversant with and willing to appropriate elements of the larger culture.

Conversion and Ethnicity

In ch.1, I addressed the bonds between religion and nationality. There I emphasized the growth of "elective cults," including Judaism, from the 4th century B.C.E. and the consequent diminution of the strength of these bonds. In that discussion, I was concerned to open the door to the distinction in antiquity, as today, between religion and ethnicity. Here, I wish to explore the consequences of conversion on the proselyte's ethnic identity.

²⁰² Leonard Victor Rutgers, "Archaeological Evidence for the Interaction of Jews and Non-Jews in Late Antiquity," *AJA* 96, no. 1 (1992): 101-18. Leonard Victor. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome : Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (RGRW; Leiden: Brill, 1995).

²⁰³ Rutgers, *Jews in Late Ancient Rome*, 56-57, 67, 73-79. Here I use the term "Jewish" since the identification of burial sites depends on the evidence from what are presumed to be "religious" artifacts, particularly menorahs.

²⁰⁴ Rutgers, "Archaeological Evidence," 108.

John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith have proposed six features of an *ethnie*, an “ethnic community.”

1. [A] common proper name, to identify and express the “essence” of the community;
2. a myth of common ancestry, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship, . . . a “super-family;”
3. shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;
4. one or more elements of common culture, that need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language;
5. a link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie*, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples;
6. a sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie*'s population.²⁰⁵

The authors point out “the importance of shared myths and memories in the definition of *ethnies*, and the subjective identification of individuals with the community . . . The second key element is the orientation to the past . . .”²⁰⁶

The importance of culture, including religion, as a feature of ethnic identity is relativized in this approach. Fredrik Barth took an almost radical approach to culture in his 1969 essay challenging what he considered an undue emphasis at that time on “culture” in defining an ethnic identity. Barth, for instance, considered the studies of the persistence of an ethnic identity despite changes in the culture, asking “what is the unit

²⁰⁵ John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, “Introduction,” in *Ethnicity* (eds. J. Hutchinson and A. D. Smith; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6-7.

²⁰⁶ Hutchinson and Smith, “Introduction”, 7.

whose continuity in time is depicted in such studies?”²⁰⁷ Instead, Barth emphasized the ascription of ethnicity by the individual and the group and the consequent definition of group boundaries by the group as the defining process for constructing an ethnic identity.²⁰⁸

I previously mentioned Esler speaking of multiple ethnic identities, of Atomos as a “Cyprian *and* Judean.”²⁰⁹ In Esler’s schema, a Syrian come to Transtiberium and baptized as a Jew would become a Syrian and Judean, presumably maintaining both ethnicities. Esler may not intend to say that both identities are maintained in full (for instance, simultaneously holding to two myths or origin) but his language does not allow for certain features of one ethnicity to be adopted while others are subordinated or dropped. Only a schizophrenic would attempt to maintain both identities in full. In my system, a Judaism-practicing Syrian, a Syrian Jew, would be classed a non-Judean Jew. Noy reports such double labels on inscriptions in Rome.²¹⁰

To illustrate how one ethnicity may be subordinate to another, Johnson Hodge cites the work of Judith A. Nagata on the “variability of ethnic status” in George Town, Penang, Malaysia.²¹¹ Nagata discussed the impact of conversion to Islam within the

²⁰⁷ Barth, “Introduction”, 12.

²⁰⁸ Barth, “Introduction”, 14-16.

²⁰⁹ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 73-74.

²¹⁰ Noy, *Foreigners*, 254.

²¹¹ Caroline E. Johnson Hodge, “Apostle to the Gentiles: Constructions of Paul’s Identity,” *BI* 13, no. 3 (2005): 274. Judith A. Nagata, “What Is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society,” *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 2 (1974): 331-50.

multi-ethnic (Malay, Indonesian, Arab, Chinese, other) multi-religious (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhist, Confucianism) community studied. A similar study published in the mid-1950's with a greater focus on the rural situation found that the Indian Hindu convert to Islam was said to *masuk Melayu* – to become a Malay. Two decades later in an urban setting, Nagata found that this was no longer the case. While a common religion did promote a common Malay ethnicity, the complicated political, economic, and social situation resulted in considerable oscillation in the choice of ethnic referent group (Malay, Indian, or Arab), with the choice at any one time based on desire to appear close to or distant from a reference group, expediency or consideration of social status.²¹² That is, one of Arab descent might self-describe as Arab in certain situations but as a Malay in others.

Her work is relevant to mine as she demonstrates that, in a situation of religious conversion, the expression of ethnicity oscillated depending on the particular context of the proselyte. From this I suggest the oscillation in referent group that Nagata chronicled would be mirrored in the multi-ethnic world of ancient Rome. A convert to the religion of Judaism would not always (perhaps not even most of the time) self-ascribe herself as Judean, as a member of a relatively small and often disparaged group tied back to a small, poor, and generally insignificant state in Palestine. Proselytes to Judaism in ancient Rome would not necessarily identify themselves as “Judeans” but as “Syrians who practice Judaism.”

²¹² Nagata, “What is a Malay?,” 340-44.

The literary evidence does not contradict such a conclusion. Romans writing about converts to Judaism from among non-Judeans referred to them as *Iudaei*/Ἰουδαῖοι, citing their adherence to the overt signals of Judaism (worship practice, dietary restrictions, etc.). Whether the designations should be translated as “Judean” or “Jew” in these passages is a matter of intense debate, but it is not clear that the writers were intending to mean that the Roman proselyte had renounced her “Romanness” in favor of “Judeanness.” Izates, in Josephus’ narrative, was warned against circumcision as it involved the overt adoption of the religion of the Jews, not that he would become a Judean.

Jewish References to Proselytes

There is one more point to be made about the status of the proselytes. I claim Paul believed he was addressing an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers whom he addressed not as “Jews,” but rather as “non-Judeans” (as I will show in the next chapter). Were he to believe that converting to Judaism resulted in becoming “Judean” as well, this form of address would not be acceptable. Those who would tie religion and ethnicity more closely would argue that if Paul acknowledged their conversion to Judaism he would have referred to them exclusively as “Jews.” The discussion above shows that this might not necessarily be the case in Rome, where Syrian and African Jews domiciled, while the work of Nagata suggests that maintenance of an original ethnic identity after religious conversion is not inexplicable.

As a supplement to Nagata’s work, I would point out that Judean Jewish writers were reluctant to categorize “proselytes” as “Jews.” This is true even though Jews

welcomed the convert into the community. Philo has been quoted on the acceptance of converts into the community of Jews on the basis of equality (*Spec. Laws* 1, XII.51). The Torah puts the resident alien and the native Hebrew on the same basis before the LORD: “There shall be one law for you and for the resident stranger; . . . You and the stranger shall be alike before the LORD; the same ritual and the same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you” (Num 15:15-16 JPS; see also Exod 12:49). Later rabbis also stressed this same principle, that the convert must be accepted into the community.

Nevertheless, there was a continuing practice to use other terms to refer to proselytes – never referring to them as “Jews” or “Israelites” – and to distinguish between proselytes and birth Jews in various ways. The citation from Num cited above assumes two categories of persons, “you and the stranger.” The Hebrew Scriptures typically refer to the גֵּר (*ger*, “sojourner, resident alien”) who, according to Num are under the Law, and hence presumed to be “Jews.” But the Biblical tradition is of a distinction between “Israelites” and “resident aliens.” Converts from among the Ammonites and Moabites are excluded from entering the assembly for ten generations (Deut 23:3).²¹³

The distinction in status between an adult male born of Jewish parents but circumcised only as an adult and a newly converted foreigner is highlighted in a controversy recorded in *M. Pesachim* 8:8 between the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel. The question is the purity status of the two. Both agree that a Judean who is

²¹³ This prohibition may be behind the book of Ruth and its references to her. There, even after taking Naomi’s people and Naomi’s God as her own, Ruth is referred to as “Ruth the Moabite” five times, stressing her birth origins (1:22; 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10).

circumcised and then immersed may eat the Paschal meal; he is ritually pure. The House of Shammai held that the same rule applied to the non-Judean convert. The House of Hillel, held, however, that a non-Judean must wait seven days and perform the ablutions for the dead before being pure.²¹⁴ Suppositions as to the reasons for the difference need not detain us. The importance is that both houses recognized that this was an issue to be decided separately for the Judean and non-Judean proselyte and that the highly influential House of Hillel drew the distinction more strongly.

While stressing rabbinic hospitality towards proselytes, Bernard J. Bamberger noted the ambiguous status of the convert under the rabbi's interpretation of Jewish law.²¹⁵ Bamberger points out that "One of the most important legal generalizations on our subject is the oft repeated 'A convert is like a child just born' -- that is, he has absolutely no blood relations."²¹⁶ The logical implication of this would be that the convert is not an Israelite, a Judean, but is some non-ethnic kind of person. In prayers, while there is some dispute, the Talmud generally forbade the convert to say "the God of *our* fathers" since the birth fathers of the convert were not actually Jews.²¹⁷ Since the convert cannot trace

²¹⁴ Lawrence S. Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish Christian Schism* (Hoboken NJ: Ktav, 1985), 27-28. The house of Hillel argued that this ruling was needed in order to be certain that the proselyte "will not err in future years and partake of the paschal offering or visit the Temple while in a state of impurity." Both rules also applied to women converts. Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew?*, 28.

²¹⁵ Bernard J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1939), 60-61. A less complete description may also be found in Korbinian Spann, "The Meaning of Circumcision for Strangers in Rabbinic Literature," in *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Normativity, and Rituals* (ed. B. Eckhardt; Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2012), 225-42, here 232-33.

²¹⁶ Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 62.

²¹⁷ Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 65-66.

ancestry to one of the original twelve tribes, the convert has no right to a portion of the land.²¹⁸ To demonstrate the inferior legal and social status of the convert, Bamberger observes

Should we have to choose among victims of poverty, captives to redeem, people in danger of losing their lives, etc., the Mishnah gives us a table of precedence as to who shall have first consideration. The order is: priest, Levite, Israelite, *mamzer* [anyone with unidentified fathers], *Nethinim* [temple slaves or servants, believed by the rabbis to be descendants of the Gibeonites who converted at the time of Joshua], convert, freedmen.²¹⁹

From all Bamberger presents, it is clear that while the convert would be welcomed, she would bear a status different different than the native born.

The historical continuum from the production of the Biblical to the Talmudic texts spans several hundred years. Paul stands within this time frame. Since the Bible and the Talmud speak with one voice about the status of the convert, we can assume Paul would have shared these sentiments, welcoming converts to Judaism but not necessarily according them the same status as native born Judean Jews. They were non-Judean Jews.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 65.

²¹⁹ Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 64. Bamberger notes at the same place that scholars would take precedence over all other categories to be saved.

²²⁰ Nagata, in the article previously referenced, found that Chinese converts to Islam were treated in very much the same way. It was the one ethnic gap which religion could not bridge. She observes that “. . . many Malay informants admitted privately that, even when a Chinese enters Islam and marries a Malay, they can never quite forget that he (or she) is ‘really a Chinese,’ and again the factors of social distance and perceptions of the relative political statuses of Malays and Chinese will find their expression in ethnic sentiments.” Nagata, “What is a Malay?,” 346.

Jesus Followers Come to Rome

Having established the possibility of non-Judean Jews in Rome and the processes by which they came to be there, the next step is to establish how the community of Jesus followers came and developed in Rome. I will briefly cite the scholarly consensus that the first Jesus followers in Rome came through the Jewish community. Based on my previous discussion on conversion, it then seems likely that the community of Jesus followers grew *within* the Jewish community. If that is so, can one find any reason to conclude that there was a split among Jews between those who did and those who did not follow Jesus? If not, then the presumption must be that the community to whom Paul wrote was Jewish. I open this section reviewing the evidence that Jesus followers were first within the Jewish community.

The earliest history of Jesus followers in Rome is lost. There are no records, in the New Testament or elsewhere, about how the first knowledge of and rituals involving Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah reached Rome. Paul writes that he has long wanted to go to Rome but has been delayed (Rom 1:9-13); hence he was not the one to bring Jesus' gospel. Acts of the Apostles ends with Paul in Rome, having been welcomed by the brothers (28:15), and meeting with "the leaders of the Jews" who professed to have only second-hand knowledge about Jesus followers (28:17-23). Thus the New Testament gives us no clue as to who were the first to arrive in Rome with news of Jesus of Nazareth.

Commentators generally agree, based on inferences drawn from various texts, that the practices associated with following Jesus first came to Rome in and through the Jewish community there. Scholars often cite Ambrosiaster the fourth century

commentator on Romans that Christianity came to Rome though in a Jewish sort of way.²²¹ Modern scholars have indicated the influence of Jewish traditions on the Church in Rome through its formative years. After analyzing *1 Clem.*, Lampe concluded “We must formulate . . . *Christians from the sphere of influence of the synagogues*, Jewish Christians as well as Gentile Christians, exercised an astonishing influence on the formation of theology in urban Roman Christianity in the first century.”²²² Through his analysis of Romans, 1 Peter, Hebrews, and 1 Clement, Brown argued the presence of a “Jewish/Gentile Christianity more conservative in its preservation of the Jewish Law and cult than the Christianity of Paul in Galatians.”²²³ Lampe stresses that the presence of “originally Jewish traditions in the second century church” is not evidence of *second-century* Jewish Jesus followers but of the traditions of the Roman church itself.²²⁴ I therefore take it as accepted that the first Jesus followers in Rome were, indeed Jews, but not necessarily Judeans.

The congruence between modern theories about alternation, or religious conversion, and ancient narratives about conversion provides assurance that I can discuss the growth of the community of Jesus followers. First, we can assume that the community

²²¹ Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries*, 1.

²²² Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 75. See also Rudolf Brändle and Ekkehard Stegerman, “The Formation of the First ‘Christian Congregations’ in Rome in the Context of the Jewish Congregations,” in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (eds. K. P. Donfried and P. Richardson; Grand Rapids Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 122.

²²³ Raymond E. Brown and John Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 90.

²²⁴ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 79.

of Jesus followers grew through networks of friendship. Secondly, at the formative stages of the community, we may be assured that Jesus followers saw themselves as remaining within the community of Jews, practicing a form of Judaism. The experience of these first Jesus followers would not have been one of alternation or conversion, but secondary socialization, adopting a specific way of being Jewish. Then we should be cautious in our reconstructions of the practices and “beliefs” of this community. We have no evidence as to whether Jesus was viewed as a Messiah, prophet, or sage. We have no evidence how the practices and rites of this community related to the larger Jewish community. The work by Ambrosiaster, Brown and Lampe testifies to the Jewish roots of the first Jesus followers and the persistence of Jewish influences well into the 2nd century. It is likely that the first Jesus followers saw themselves as moving within traditional Judaism. Jesus of Nazareth could be understood as the anointed one, come to initiate, in the last times, the deliverance of Jerusalem and all of Judea.

Acts provides a picture of how these first communities may have engaged other Jews. Acts 2:46-47 reports that the first followers in Jerusalem “devoted themselves to meeting” every day in the temple area and “to breaking bread in their homes.” At a time of great diversity within Judaism, in other words, Jesus followers in Rome would not necessarily describe their religious journey as a “conversion,” but rather a shift within Judaism, an example of secondary socialization.

So far, my reconstruction of the formation of the community of Jesus followers to whom Paul wrote is well within the center of the scholarly community. I differ from many others in my conviction that Paul wrote to non-Judean *Jewish* Jesus followers. In

the first chapter I discussed the many opinions on the audience for Romans. Most prominent are those who contend that Paul wrote to reconcile non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers and Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. These scholars agree that the community of Jesus followers first developed within the community of Roman Jews, but argue that a split within the community led to a “parting of the ways” of Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers. Paul then wrote to this latter group. I do not see evidence of a split having occurred in Rome, and so must engage the historical reconstructions of other scholars who provide what they see as a plausible reason for the split. This was the impact of the so-called Edict of Claudius, the expulsion of Jews from Rome.

What was the Impact of the Edict of Claudius?

According to the standard, scholarly reconstruction, strife in Rome within the Jewish community between Jesus followers and non-Jesus-followers grew so intense that the Emperor Claudius issued two decrees to quell the disorder. The consequence of these decrees, say most scholars, was, first, to divorce the community of Jesus followers from the community of Jews who did not follow Jesus, completing the parting of their ways and, second, to separate Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers.²²⁵ In presenting and analyzing the evidence, first I will recapitulate the majority reconstruction of these events and then provide my critique of it.

²²⁵ Among major commentators following this line are Byrne, *Romans*, 11-12. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.1111. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 66. Jewett, *Romans*, 61. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 11. Others include Das, *Solving*, 149-202. Wedderburn, *Reasons for Romans*, 56.

The Majority: The Edict of Claudius Divided the Community of Jesus Followers²²⁶

The Roman historians Suetonius (second century) and Cassius Dio (early third century) report actions taken by the Emperor Claudius against the Jewish community in Rome.²²⁷ Cassius Dio reports that in the first year of his reign, 41 C.E., Claudius ordered the suppression of Jewish activities (*Historia* LX.6.6). Helga Botermann has argued that the reason for the action was related to the introduction of the teaching of Jesus followers to the Jewish community. While there is no Roman evidence of such unrest, Botermann, and Jewett following her, cite reports from Paul (for example Paul's report of receiving 39 lashes [2 Cor 11:24]) and Acts (Stephen's death from stoning [Acts 6:8]) that such was the reaction to the teaching of Jesus followers in synagogues and conclude that a similar set of circumstances obtained in Rome in 41.²²⁸

Suetonius cites an undated action of Claudius: "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit," (Claudius 25.4m [LCL]). The majority of scholars follow the sense of William Heineman's LCL translation: "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from

²²⁶ Wolfgang Wiefel, in a 1970 article, provided the basic narrative that others, particularly Helga Botermann, have both elaborated and refined. An English translation is in *The Romans Debate*. Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; Peabody Mass: Hendrickson, 1991), 85-101.

²²⁷ Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars* (trans. J. C. Rolfe; 2 vols.; vol. II; Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1979). Dio, *History* LX.6.6.

²²⁸ Helga Botermann, *Das Judenedikt des Kaisers Claudius: Römischer Staat und Christiani im 1. Jahrhundert* (vol. 71; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 132-33, 188. Jewett, *Romans*, 60. Botermann compares the similar response by Claudius at about the same time to the Alexandrian riots between Jews and others. In the case of Alexandria, a definable external force was involved (the anti-Jewish riots which prompted Philo's deputation to Rome). The absence of any such external event in the case of the Roman Jews means that internal strife was the cause of Claudius' action. Botermann, *Das Judenedikt*, 103-40.

Rome” (*Claurius*, 25.4 [Heineman, LCL]). “Chrestus” is taken to be a reference to Christ and to continuing agitation within the Jewish community caused by dissension between Jesus followers and non-Jesus followers.²²⁹ The account in Acts 18:2 of the meeting in Corinth between Paul and two *Ioudaeos* from Rome, Priscilla and Aquilla, who, along with all Jews, had been ordered from Rome is used to date the Suetonius notice to 49 C.E. Botermann *et al.* then observe that since dissension had been continuing for eight years, Claudius took especially severe action against the Jews, exiling “them,” by which commentators understand the agitators in the community.

Das has pointed out that the Roman authorities would not necessarily know who within the Jewish community would be the agitators.²³⁰ He concludes that authorities must have relied on the leaders of the synagogues to mark the tumult’s instigators and the leaders marked for exile the *Jewish* Jesus followers. He argues that

Christ-believing God-fearers [i.e., non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers who were nonetheless affiliated with the Jewish community] would not have posed the same threat to the Jewish community’s self-identity as natural-born Jews [Judean Jewish Jesus followers] and proselytes [non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers] who had accepted and were promoting Jesus as the Christ. The synagogues would have marked Christ-believing Jews and proselytes for Claudius’s expulsion.²³¹

Das correctly observes that Judean Jewish Jesus followers would have had great influence in encouraging the growth of the community of Jesus followers. The

²²⁹ The commentaries noted above follow this argument. As Richard Pervo notes, “Were the name of the agitator different, interpreters would conclude that Jews, stirred up by some firebrand, were involved in riots with the general population.” Pervo, *Acts*, 446.

²³⁰ His observation agrees with Shaye Cohen’s that Jews were indistinguishable from the general population in antiquity. Cohen, *Beginnng*, 67.

²³¹ Das, *Solving*, 201.

description of Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:2 confirms this interpretation in the majority opinion, for they are considered Jews and Jesus followers.

Without Judean and non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers in Rome, non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers were no longer welcomed in the synagogues. These then formed house churches where their practices developed. Five years later, in 54 C.E. after Nero was proclaimed emperor, the Claudian edict was rescinded, lapsed, or was no longer enforced. Then the exiled Judean Jewish Jesus followers returned to Rome but found their more traditional, Torah observant practices unwelcome in the house churches. The view of many scholars is that Paul addressed the dissension between the two communities in his letter.

Contra Majority: No Evidence of Split between Non-Jewish and Jewish Jesus Followers

I dispute this reconstruction of a division between Jewish and Non-Jewish Jesus followers. My first reason is the interpretation of the notice by Cassius Dio as evidence of the reaction in the Jewish community of missionary activities by Jesus followers. As they admit, there is no solid evidence of this in the record. Dio wrote:

As for the Jews, who had again increased so greatly that by reason of their multitude it would have been hard without raising a tumult to bar them from the city, he did not drive them out, but ordered them, while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings. He also disbanded the clubs, which had been reintroduced by Gaius. Moreover, seeing that there was no use in forbidding the populace to do certain things unless their daily life should be reformed, he abolished the taverns where they were wont to gather and drink, (*Historia* LX.6.6. [Cary, LCL])

Several points about this deserve attention. First, Dio expressly states that the Jews were so numerous that they could not be barred from the city – that is, they were too numerous to exile. This of course contradicts the reports by both Suetonius and Acts of

the exile of Jews. It is also similar to Dio's report about the action taken by Tiberius on his ascension: "As the Jews flocked to Rome in great numbers and were converting many of the natives to their ways, he [Tiberius] banished most of them" (*Historia*, LVII.18.5a [Cary, LCL]).

Second, the action against the Jews was taken not because of any tumult that they had raised but because of the very vitality of the community: they had increased so greatly. The notice by Dio, in other words, can be more easily read as a typical imperial action against a foreign religion than the consequence of otherwise unattested unrest in the Jewish community.

The third point to make is that this occurred at the same time that Claudius disbanded all *collegia* ("the clubs"). It was not an action directed solely against the Jewish community. Wendy Cotter notes that at his ascension, "he faced the need for restoration of order at every level of the empire's organization."²³² Cotter interprets Dio's notice as reflecting a lax attitude towards the *collegia* under Claudius' predecessor Gaius.²³³ For these reasons, reading the report of an action by Claudius against the Jews of Rome as the consequence of public disorder following the coming of Jesus followers to Rome is, at best, unconvincing.

The combination of Suetonius and Acts form the primary foundation of the majority view. H. Dixon Slingerland has provided the most sustained challenge to the

²³² Wendy Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations, 64 BCE -- 200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (eds. J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson; London: Routledge, 1996), 74-89, here 80.

²³³ Cotter, "Collegia and Roman Law", 80.

majority reading of Suetonius. Slingerland understands the notice quite differently from that taken from LCL above. He points out that Suetonius was careful to explain who named persons were or to cite without explanation only those whom readers could be expected to recognize (in the verse, Iudaeos, and Roma, plus the implied subject Claudius).²³⁴ Since Suetonius has not introduced the name “Chrestos” earlier, Slingerland concludes that the name must have been familiar to his second century audience. Attribution of the name to Christ is a not unreasonable conclusion. If this reading is correct then “impulsore Chresto” refers to “assidue tumultantes,” and *Claudius* 25:4 might be translated “Claudius expelled from Rome the Jews who were in continual tumult at the instigation of Christ,” very similar to the LCL translation.

There is a legitimate second reading. First of all, there were other people with the name Suetonius does use. Χρηστός is documented in antiquity throughout the Greek speaking world, as is its Latin form, Chrestus, in Rome.²³⁵ Further, while other writers might have spelled Christus or Christianus with an “e,” Suetonius did not, at least not in *Nero* 16:2 where he wrote “afflicti supplicis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae” (“Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to new and mischievous superstition” [*Nero* 16:2 [Rolfe, LCL])). Not only does Suetonius write Christiani without an “e” here, his description also fits the first appearance of Christians in his work. He writes, in other words, as if to introduce them to his readers.

²³⁴ H. Dixon Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking and the Early Imperial Repression of Judaism at Rome* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 169-77, particularly 169-70.

²³⁵ For lists of the Greek, see Botermann, *Das Judenedikt*, 89. Slingerland devotes a chapter to its occurrence in Greek and in Latin. Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking* 179-201.

Finally, Slingerland has identified a number of historically plausible Chresti who could have encouraged Claudius' own animosity towards the Jews to prompt their expulsion from Rome.²³⁶ Slingerland then translates the phrase "impulsore Chresto" as modifying "expulit" and the verse may be translated "Claudius expelled at the instigation of Chrestus the Jews who were continually in tumult." Jewett finds Slingerland's reconstruction "highly unlikely . . . in view of the absence of any other evidence of an official by this name in the Claudian period."

Slingerland's detailed scholarship is impressive, but neither Slingerland nor his opponents offer wholly compelling arguments on "impulsore Chresto." Slingerland has demonstrated the real possibility that Chrestus, an advisor to Claudius, could have persuaded the emperor to expel Jews from Rome and that Suetonius' language does not require the assumption that "Chrestus" is a misspelling. In the final analysis, however, his reconstruction does indeed require positing an imperial official known to Suetonius and his mid-second century audiences but unremarked by other Romans and now unknown to contemporary scholars. Slingerland's opponents use his own argument, that a name Suetonius does not otherwise describe must have been well known to his audience, to conclude that the only possible personage from the first century it could refer to is Jesus Christ from Galilee.

Their work, on the other hand, ignores the comments Suetonius does make in *Nero* and assumes that 21st century scholars know so much about first and second century imperial politics that all significant imperial functionaries must have been identified by

²³⁶ Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking* 232-41.

now and known to them. Further, the majority of scholars seem to adopt a “Christians Christians everywhere” reading of the history of this period. The history of the fortunes of Judeans in Rome, like the experience of every non-traditional group, was of a cyclic waxing and waning. It is a more elegant historical reconstruction to assume that both of the actions of Claudius, the first in 41 and the second probably in 49, were precipitated by typical Roman anti-Jewish policies.

The interpretation of Acts 18:2 is also debatable. Here, the translation is not really at issue, but the import of the text is. First of all, I contend that Acts does not identify Priscilla and Aquilla as Jesus followers. In the verse, Acts refers twice to Ἰουδαῖοι: “There he [Paul] found a Jew [Ἰουδαῖον] named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews [Ἰουδαίους] to leave Rome. Paul went to see them” (NRSV). Based on their subsequent missionary activity (Acts 18:18, 26) and undoubted relationship to Paul (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3), scholars propose that the two are Judean Jewish Jesus followers who were expelled from Rome under the Claudian edict. Lampe argues that Priscilla and Aquila must have been Judean Jewish Jesus followers when they arrived in Corinth because if they were not they would have been unlikely to offer shelter to a Jesus follower.²³⁷

First of all, the author of Acts refers to a person, custom, or synagogue as “Jew/ish” 79 times. When the text makes no mention that a “Jew” is a Jesus follower, the reader safely may assume that the person is a Judean Jewish non-Jesus follower, generally one antagonistic to Paul and other Jesus followers. When a “Jew” is a Jesus

²³⁷ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 12.

follower, Acts marks it. Thus Acts 16:2 tells of a “Jewish woman who was a believer,” and 21:20 of “believers from among the Jews.” When Paul self-identifies as a Jew (21:39, 22:3), the audience is well aware that he is also a Jesus follower. If one only had 18:2, one would have to describe Aquila and Priscilla and the other subjects of the Edict of Claudius in the same category Acts considers other anonymous “Jews:” Judean, Jewish, non-Jesus followers. The narrative in Acts does not contradict this. It should be recalled that only later in Acts is it clear that Priscilla and Aquila are Jesus followers when they accompany Paul to Ephesus (18:18) and there help catechize Apollos (18:26). In the meantime, in 18:4-5, Paul goes to the synagogue to teach Jews – Jews who do not follow Jesus. That is, according to Acts, at first Paul was received by Judean Jews who did not follow Jesus. At Acts 18:7, Paul and his fellows do leave the existing synagogue to establish a “synagogue” in the neighboring home of Titus Justus. In Acts 18:8 we learn that “Crispus, the synagogue official, came to believe in the Lord along with his entire household, and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized.”

According to Acts, many of the “many baptized” were from the Corinthian synagogue. Perhaps Acts was careful to avoid saying that Paul did the baptizing, but there is nothing in Acts to say that others of Paul’s community were not doing baptizing, nothing to preclude the baptism of Priscilla and Aquila while in Corinth.²³⁸

²³⁸ Lampe also points out that in 1 Cor 1:14-16 Paul claims to have baptized only Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas, and does not know whether he baptized anyone else beyond these. Based on this notice, Lampe argues that Paul did not baptize Priscilla and Aquilla. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 11. Given the uncertainty of Paul’s statement, I would be reluctant to put much weight on this interpretation. Besides the uncertainty in Paul’s statement, there is nothing to say that others did not baptize them.

In my reading, during the time that Paul lived and worked with Priscilla and Aquilla, he brought them to accept his gospel. Paul established a close, personal relationship with a couple living apart from their home and community, and led them through a process of secondary socialization to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, the Christ. Based only on the evidence in Acts, therefore, those exiled from Rome – whoever they were and for whatever reason they were exiled – were Judean, Jewish, non-Jesus followers.²³⁹

The last argument to be considered is Das' theory that the leaders of the Jewish community would choose to have the Judean Jewish Jesus followers exiled, rather than the non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers whom he presumes brought the controversy to Rome. This argument assumes, first of all, that the leaders of the Jewish community were *not themselves* Jesus followers.²⁴⁰ Assuming for the moment that they were not Jesus followers, it is difficult to fathom why they would arrange for the exile of *Jewish* Jesus followers who had been living and worshipping peacefully with the rest of the Jewish community until the advent of the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. It

²³⁹ The fact that the second Edict of Claudius is dated to 49 C.E., the same year as the extension of the *pomerium* to include the Aventine Hill (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.23) and the fact that Priscilla and Aquila are associated with the Aventine even now (the titular church of St. Priscilla stands half-way up the hill), opens the intriguing possibility that Priscilla and Aquila were forced out of their home by the extension of the *pomerium*. In this scenario, "Chresto" could become a first century property developer anxious to secure cheap land for his next project.

²⁴⁰ If they were Judean Jewish Jesus followers perhaps they arranged to have the Imperial authorities exile recalcitrant Jews who did not follow Jesus.

simply makes more sense to assume that the foreigners, and as foreigners easily exiled without due process, would be exiled rather than native born Jews.²⁴¹

My conclusion is that if there were a Claudian exile of Jews there is little reason to assume that it resulted in the discriminatory exile of Judean and non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers to the benefit of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. There is little evidence that any such action resulted in the division of the community of Jesus followers between non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers and Judean Jewish Jesus followers. The well-documented evidence of the influence of Judean Jewish Jesus followers on the church in Rome in later centuries supports this conclusion.²⁴² As a consequence, I believe that an implied audience of Rom composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers is historically plausible.

Evidence of Other Communities of Jewish Jesus followers

I opened the chapter citing Wedderburn's three criteria for a plausible historical reconstruction of the Roman audience. I have been dealing with the first, that it is plausible within the otherwise known history of the community. Wedderburn's second criterion is that it be consonant with the record of other communities. The NT includes ample evidence of Jewish Jesus followers in locations other than Rome, lending an air of plausibility to the proposition. Apart from the report in Acts 2 of the life of the Jerusalem community, Paul's other letters also provide testimony that there were Jesus followers

²⁴¹ Nanos shares my skepticism over the impact of the Edict of Claudius. He points out that after 18:2, Acts has no reference to this action as a precedent cited in the trials of Paul by Roman or Jewish authorities. Further, Paul's reception by the Roman Jews (28:22 ff.) is further evidence that Acts has little memory of a serious controversy in Rome. Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 375-78.

²⁴² See "Jesus Followers Come to Rome" earlier in this chapter.

who were closely tied to traditional practices of Judaism. In Gal, Paul reports his agreement with Peter that Peter would be the apostle to the circumcised while Paul would be the apostle to the uncircumcised (Gal 2:7-9). Nowhere in his letters does Paul ever dispute the validity of Peter's gospel to the circumcised (though Paul rebukes Peter for his interpretation of that gospel [vv. 11-12]). Further evidence of a Jewish Christianity comes in Paul's opponents in Galatia, namely the Teachers who wish the community of Jesus followers to adopt the practice of male circumcision (5:2; 6:12 also 4:10 on observance of Jewish holidays and calendars).²⁴³ Philippians 3:2-3 appears to refer to the same kind of dispute in Philippi, with certain people demanding that Jesus followers pursue circumcision.

In both 1 and 2 Cor Paul speaks of Jesus followers with conflicting gospels. In 1 Cor, Paul identifies followers of three missionaries in that city – Paul, Apollos, and Kephas (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6, 22). Of Apollos, 1 Cor and Acts preserve the only mentions in the NT. First Corinthians offers no evidence about him, other than some Corinthians belong to his “party.” Acts describes him as a Jewish Jesus follower from Alexandria, a skilled exegete of the scriptures (18:24), who first appears in Ephesus preaching a baptism of repentance according to John, and who was corrected by Priscilla and Aquila (18:24-26). Apollos left Ephesus for Corinth where he debated Jewish non-Jesus followers with great success (18:28). From these descriptions, I assume that Apollos was,

²⁴³ J. Louis Martyn describes the Teachers in Galatia, Paul's opponents, as “messianic Jews . . . [who] understand themselves to represent . . . a powerful circle of Christian Jews in the Jerusalem church, a group utterly zealous for the observance of the Law. . .” J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 118-19.

in my categorization, a Judean Jewish Jesus follower. Whether he was preaching a gospel as Torah observant as did Peter or the Teachers in Galatia is unknowable. As to the third missionary, scholars presume that “Kephas” refers to the apostle Peter.²⁴⁴

In 2 Cor 11, Paul decries anyone preaching a gospel other than his own (v. 4), and terms his competitors “super-apostles” (οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι) (11:5; 12:11). At v. 22, Paul compares himself with them in terms of Jewish traits: “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites. So am I. Are they descendants [σπέρμα] of Abraham? So am I.” Taking the two letters together, it is thus plausible to hypothesize a strong element of Torah observant, Jewish Jesus followers in Corinth, composed of the followers of Apollos and Kephas.²⁴⁵

In a number of contexts I have referred to Fredriksen’s and Boyarin’s essays in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*.²⁴⁶ The other essays in the volume deal with the evidence of “Jewish Christians” beyond the first century, documenting the continuing vigor of “Jewish Christianity” into medieval times.

²⁴⁴ Hans Conzelman, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia; trans. J. W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 32-33.

²⁴⁷ Frank Matera argues cogently that the nature of the gospel of the “super-apostles” in 2 Cor cannot be determined. Matera concludes that Paul is objecting less to the content of their gospel than to their mode of ministry and their emphasis on the power and glory of the Risen Lord. He contrasts this with Paul’s realization that “suffering, affliction, and weakness belong to the essence of a gospel that proclaims Christ crucified.” Frank Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville Ky. and London: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 20-24, quotation at 24. Calvin J. Roetzel offers a similar view: “. . . he [Paul] crafts a portrait of himself whose apostolic credentials are inscribed on a brutalized body, a tortured mind, and a self-giving spirit. The marks of these hardships that participate mythically in the passion of Christ offer proof of his legitimacy.” Calvin Roetzel, *2 Corinthians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 123.

²⁴⁶ Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed eds, *The Ways that Never Parted : Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (TSAJ; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

Hence, there is ample evidence of the life of communities, similar to the one I am describing in Rome, of Jewish Jesus followers.²⁴⁷

Conclusion: Revisiting Wedderburn

I opened this chapter highlighting Wedderburn's three criteria for a plausible reconstruction of the audience for Rom; viz., that the reconstruction be historically plausible for that community, that it fit with what is known of other communities, and that it mesh with the text of Rom.²⁴⁸ For this final section, I will summarily apply Wedderburn's criteria to my reconstruction.

Is the situation presupposed inherently plausible? Does it provide a coherent picture of the life of the Christian community in that place?

My reconstruction of an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers plausibly follows the processes of alternation and secondary socialization as outlined by Berger, Luckman, and Stark. I have concluded that non-Judean non-Jews were first attracted by their Jewish neighbors to Judaism and then, as the practice of Jesus followers came to Rome, became Jesus followers as well. The narrative that sees the Edict of Claudius fashioning a split in the Jewish community between Jesus followers and non-Jesus followers simply misses the thrust of the texts involved.

²⁴⁷ I also find intriguing the fact that it was not until the fourth century rehabilitation of the synagogue at Ostia, after a Christian basilica had been installed down the street, that the Jews of Ostia brought distinctively Jewish symbols to their synagogue. Anders Runesson, "The Synagogue at Ancient Ostia: The Building and its History from the First to the Fifth Century," in *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome* (eds. B. Olsson, et al.; Stockholm: Paul Anströms Förlag, 2001), 93-95. Prior to the Constantinian establishment of Christianity, in other words, the synagogue's art would not have been offensive to Jesus' followers.

²⁴⁸ Wedderburn, *Reasons for Romans*, 64.

Is this picture compatible with what we know from other sources concerning the history of the earliest church? Is it similar to anything else we know happened elsewhere in the church of that day?

Wedderburn's second criterion asks whether this reconstruction has traction in the history of Jesus followers elsewhere in early Christianity. That there were Jewish Jesus followers is clear from the NT, starting with the first community of Jesus followers in Galilee and Judea. The community in Antioch apparently was composed of Jews, though their ethnogeographical designation is not known. Peter's ministry was specifically to Jews. In Galatia (and perhaps Phillipi), the Teachers wished to "convert" the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers to non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. Paul's description of the situation in Corinth suggests Jewish Jesus following communities there. Further, the description of the community as non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers meshes well with the remarks from the later Roman Church. This reconstruction also helps account for the continuing evidence of "Jewish Christianity" for at least the next three centuries.

Does it fit in with what Paul's text says? Does it make good sense of that text?

In my next two chapters, I address Wedderburn's third criterion. In chapter 3, I argue that Paul's implied audience was composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. This is, of course, congruent with the audience I have historically reconstructed. The subsequent chapter, chapter 4, involves interpreting Paul's discussion of the Law in Rom. There too I conclude that the best reading of this material in Rom is congruent with an audience composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

CHAPTER THREE: READING ROMANS TO A NON-JUDEAN, JEWISH

AUDIENCE

Introduction

In this chapter, I come to the heart of my argument, demonstrating that Paul's implied audience was composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. That is to say, Paul wrote to a group not Jewish from birth who were converted to the Jewish religious traditions and follow Jesus as a sect within Judaism.

In analyzing various aspects of Rom, I have found that social identity theory provides powerful insights. Paul is dealing with intergroup relations, perceptions, and behaviors, all the subject matter of social identity theory. In the first section after this Introduction, I introduce certain key concepts of social identity theory, including its close relationship to the sociology of knowledge.

The bulk of the chapter deals directly with Rom and my effort to identify Paul's implied audience. To appreciate the problem and the approach I take, consider another, hypothetical problem. It is the year 2050 and I have just died. My executor, in going through my papers, comes across an unaddressed (but dated) solicitation to an unknown religious congregation to participate in an interfaith building project for Habitat for Humanity. Earlier in my life, my family informs her, I was a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, charged with soliciting participation by Episcopalian, Jewish, and Muslim

congregations. The question: with which religion was the unknown congregation affiliated.

I submit that the executor would start by reconstructing my own religious identity at the time of the presentation. The reason to start there is that with certain congregations I would express myself as an insider in a way that I could not with other congregations. Whether writing to Muslims, Jews, or Episcopalians, however, I would have defined some group that includes both the recipients and me.²⁴⁹ The particular way that I established that ingroup could point to the common group in the unknown letter and enable a comparison with the common group in other letters to identified congregations.

In the course of investigation, my executor doubtless would segue into a study of the letter. What were the explicit references to the audience? Did I make jokes or use references which indicate a special intimacy with the addressee? What texts did I quote? New Testament? Koran? Talmud? Extensive reliance on the Hebrew Bible may not be indicative of a particular group, since all three religious communities honor these texts. But perhaps they were used differently than in other correspondence to known audiences. Do these differences provide evidence of the implied audience?

In this chapter, I will follow a similar process. As mentioned above, the opening section provides background information on the fundamentals of social identity theory. The chapter then proceeds through six principal arguments to establish the implied

²⁴⁹ John C. Turner reports the results of studies which demonstrate that altruism is an intragroup rather than an interpersonal phenomenon. “[I]ts main necessary condition is the perception of ‘we-group’ ties between individuals . . .” John C. Turner, “Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group,” in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (ed. H. Tajfel; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 15-40, here 30.

audience. In the first, I work to establish Paul's own religious identity: who did Paul think he was at the time of writing Rom? I will argue that Paul self-identified as a (1) Judean (2) Jewish (3) Jesus follower. Of the three terms, the third is not contentious and will not be addressed seriously here. The first two terms, especially the second, are to be established. In the reconstruction of his religious identity, Paul's letters, including Rom, offer evidence of his own religious self identification through his verbal self portraits. These self portraits can then be compared with scholarly reconstructions of ancient Jewish religious practices. In what ways then do Paul's self assertions match those of other Jews?

After establishing Paul's identity, my second argument is that in his direct references to the audience Paul portrays an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. For this argument I analyze Paul's references to named individuals in Rom 16 as well as his passing references to the audience in chs 1-15. This leads to an extensive analysis of the opening of Rom, demonstrating the implied audience there.

In my third argument, I demonstrate that Paul's use of language and stereotypes points to his desire to establish a common Jewish identity with the audience. This is based on his use of close, familiar language, his relative use of "we" rather than "you" or "I," his use of ingroup language, and his deployment of stereotypes typically held by Jews.

My next argument is to problematize the view of many commentators that Rom 14:1-15:13 should be read as Paul counseling a community of Jesus followers experiencing a rift between "Jewish Christians" and "Gentile Christians" over purity and liturgical laws. Were this definitively demonstrable, it would damage my reconstruction of

the implied audience as non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. In studies of groups, it has been observed that those members who are least like the standard, exemplary members of the group are exactly the members most concerned about maintaining the group boundaries. Applying this insight to Rom, the controversy, if controversy there be, may not be between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers, but *among* Jewish Jesus followers, between those new to Judaism, such as non-Judean converts to Judaism, and those who are “cradle Jews.”

In my next argument I note how Paul deploys the Jewish Scriptures in a manner that exhibits not only his own commitment to them but his assurance that the audience is equally committed. I note specifically how Paul’s argument in chs 9-11 employs Scripture in a very Jewish way.

In my closing argument for this chapter, I compare Paul’s uses of Abraham in Gal, where Abraham divides Jews from non-Jews, and in Rom, where Abraham serves to unite Jews with non-Jewish Jesus followers. This difference between them points to a difference in audience. As Gal can be shown to be addressed to an implied audience of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, the implied audience of Rom is taken to be composed of non-Judean, *Jewish* Jesus followers.

Use of Social Identity Theory

Let me return briefly to my thought experiment. Running through the work of my executor are assumptions, whether acknowledged or not, about group behavior: Jews react differently than do Episcopalians to the same stimulus, for instance. In the case of Rom, Paul speaks of a number of groups – Jews, Greeks, barbarians, non-Judeans – the

relationships among them, and the relationship of each with Paul. This emphasis on intergroup behavior led me to employ social identity theory in order to explore these dynamics in a systematic way.²⁵⁰ “Specifically, [social identity theory] maintains that society *comprises social categories which stand in power and status relations to one another.*”²⁵¹

I claim that in Rome, Paul, a Judean Jewish Jesus follower asks non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers living in Rome to support his mission to bring non-Judean non-Jews to the worship of the Jewish God as Jesus followers while maintaining their non-Judean, non-Jewish identity. The difference between those to whom Paul directs his mission and the presumed audience in Rome lies in their characterization as “Jewish” and “non-Jewish” respectively. The degree to which Jews and non-Jews in antiquity identified themselves as hostile groups is debatable, but that they considered themselves distinct groups is indisputable. Experiments underlying social identity theory consistently demonstrate the power of group membership to impact behavior. Indeed the earliest experiments showed that the simple act of arbitrarily placing individuals into groups resulted in their discriminating in favor of the group to which they were assigned and against other groups.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Hogg and Abrams have provided a helpful overview and summary of social identity theory. Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*.

²⁵¹ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 14.

²⁵² Henri Tajfel, et al., “Social Categorization and Ingroup Behaviour,” *EJSP* 1, no. 2 (1971): 149-78.

Recognizing its power, scholars have begun to explicitly engage social identity theory in the analysis of NT texts.²⁵³ Since it is still somewhat unusual, however, I here set out the principles of social identity theory which I use most in this chapter.

Categorization

Social identity theory defines an individual's social identity as the knowledge by an individual of membership in a certain group, together with the emotional and cognitive significance which the individual attaches to that membership.²⁵⁴ Marilyn Brewer provided a high level summary of the implications of this basic assumption:

1. Group-based attitudes, perceptions, and behavior arise from basic cognitive categorization processes that partition the social world into ingroups and outgroups.
2. Attachment to and preference for ingroups is the primary driver of intergroup relations. Ingroup favoritism gives rise to intergroup discrimination, irrespective of attitudes toward specific outgroups.
3. Attitudes and emotions toward specific outgroups reflect appraisals of the nature of the relationships between ingroup and outgroup that have implications for the maintenance or enhancement of ingroup resources,

²⁵³ A notable exponent is Esler, *Conflict and Identity*. Social identity theory is used in a more limited way in Stephen Spence, *The Parting of the Ways: The Roman Church as a Case Study* (Leuven: Peters, 2004). J. Brian Tucker adopted a methodology based on social identity theory to describe the formation of the Corinthian community. J. Brian Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Eugene, Oreg.: Pickwick, 2010).

²⁵⁴ Henri Tajfel, "Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison," in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. H. Tajfel; New York: Academic Press, 1978), 61-76, here 63.

values, and well-being. Outgroup prejudices both reflect and justify the existing structure of intergroup relations.²⁵⁵

Social identity theorists describe the process of separating ingroups and outgroups as “categorization,” “the process of ordering the environment in terms of categories, i.e., through grouping persons . . . [for] the systematization of the environment for the purpose of action.”²⁵⁶ Categorization “clarifies intergroup boundaries by producing group stereotypical and normative perceptions and actions, and assigns people, including self, to the contextually relevant category.”²⁵⁷ The self-categorization “causes self-perception and self-definition to become more in terms of the individual's representation of the defining characteristics of the group, or the group *prototype*.”²⁵⁸

The categorization of individuals and groups leads to the observed behavior of prejudice in favor of those in the ingroup and against any in the outgroup.²⁵⁹ Since self-perception and self-esteem are based on the ingroup to which the individual belongs, they are enhanced by favorable comparisons with the outgroup. As a consequence, perceptions

²⁵⁵ Marilynn Brewer, “The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations: Social Categorization, Ingroup Bias and Outgroup Prejudice,” in *Social Psychology : Handbook of Basic Principles* (eds. A. W. Kruglanski and E. T. Higgins; New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 695-715, here 695.

²⁵⁶ Henri Tajfel and Joseph P. Forgas, “Social Categorization: Cognitions, Values and Groups,” in *Stereotypes and Prejudice: Essential Readings* (ed. C. Stangor; Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2000), 49-63, here 49.

²⁵⁷ Michael A. Hogg, “Intragroup Processes, Group Structure and Social Identity,” in *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel* (ed. W. P. Robinson; Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996), 65-93, here 67.

²⁵⁸ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 21.

²⁵⁹ Tajfel and Forgas, “Social Categorization”, 51.

of differences between the ingroup and outgroup and, at the same time, similarities among individuals within the ingroup are magnified.²⁶⁰

In its understanding of intergroup dynamics, social identity theory is in harmony with the work of Berger and Luckmann in the sociology of knowledge. Scholars in both fields work from the assumption that reality is not something “out there” to be comprehended and assimilated. “It is constructed by individuals from the raw materials provided to them by the social context in which they live.”²⁶¹ Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams commented that “The nature of the social categories and their relations to one another lend a society its distinctive social structure, *a structure which precedes individual human beings*.”²⁶² When speaking about conformity, behavior by an individual aligned with the norms of a group, they observe that “The central question for social psychology concerns how, through what process, and under what conditions, the individual embodies the norms of a group. For sociology this is the issue of socialization . . . while for social psychology it is *conformity*.”²⁶³ Perhaps the link between the sociology of knowledge and social identity theory may be expressed as social identity theorists study the impact of the construction and maintenance of differing socially constructed symbolic universes on the inter- and intra-group activities of humans.

²⁶⁰ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 22-23.

²⁶¹ Tajfel and Forgas, “Social Categorization,” 59.

²⁶² Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 14; emphasis added.

²⁶³ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 159.

Leadership

Paul, I have shown, writes to solicit assistance from the Roman audience. In this, Paul is looking to influence and exercise a degree of leadership over the Roman Jesus followers. Hogg has described the process of leadership as follows:

Leadership is predominantly a group process in which one person transforms other members of the group so that they adopt a vision (often a new vision) and are galvanized into pursuing the vision on behalf of the group -- leadership is not simply managing a group's activities.²⁶⁴

Thus, to exercise leadership in Rome, Paul must demonstrate that he is a member of the same ingroup as his audience. He demonstrates common membership by appealing to their values as his own. In a type of reverse reading, the audience then may be identified by the values which Paul asserts he shares with the audience.

In the course of developing his position with the Romans, one area Paul must deal with is their stereotypes. As indicated in the description of categorization, part of a group's categorization process involves the construction of stereotypes: "an oversimplified mental image of . . . some category of person, institution or event which is shared . . . by large numbers of people . . . commonly, but not necessarily accompanied by prejudice."²⁶⁵ Stereotypes are the common property of the ingroup and are not usually shared with other groups.

²⁶⁴ Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," 716-33, here 28.

²⁶⁵ Tajfel and Forgas, "Social Categorization," 57. Daphna Oyserman points out that a social identity itself is a stereotype of the self, "generalizations about ingroups to which one belongs that influence the sense one makes of who one is and can become and one's place in the social world." Daphna Oyserman, "Social Identity and Self-Regulation," in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles* (eds. A. W. Kruglanski and E. T. Higgins; New York and London: Guilford, 2007), 432-53, here 434.

I use these key concepts – self-categorization, leadership of ingroups, and the use of stereotypes – throughout my analysis of Rom. They are introduced here to show their coherence with each other within social identity theory.

Paul's Social Identity

Throughout Rom, Paul works to establish a common social identity with the audience. Given that, then my claim that the implied audience for Rom may be categorized as composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers has as a necessary but not sufficient condition that Paul self-identify as a Jew. Thus establishment of Paul's social identity as a Judean Jewish Jesus follower is one important step in the establishment of the audience's identity. In this section, I will argue for the persistence of Paul's Jewish identity throughout his career as apostle to non-Judean non-Jews.

Paul's self-presentation in his letters and his depiction in Acts demonstrate a multi-faceted identity. In his correspondence with the Corinthians, Paul boasts of his Judean Jewish identity: "Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast . . . Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I" (NRSV 2 Cor 11:18, 22). Elsewhere, Paul calls himself a Pharisee, a Judean, of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5), once, if not necessarily at the time of writing, zealous for his ancestral traditions (Gal 1:14). But in his undisputed letters, this descendant of Benjamin writes in "fluent and competent Greek," refers to the Hebrew Scriptures in their Greek version, and employs rhetorical techniques taught in Greek schools to convince his

audience.²⁶⁶ Acts adds claims that Paul was a Roman citizen of the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:11; 21:39) who studied under the Jewish scholar Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

Such multiple identities were not uncommon in Paul's day. Joseph Geiger has summarized the ways of identifying "Jews," "Greeks," and "Syrians" in antiquity.²⁶⁷ In this project, Geiger studied Paul, Philo's nephew Tiberius Julius Alexander, Herod, Herod's sons, and Herod's grandson. All of these were regularly identified by a number of markers, including language(s), place of birth, religious affiliation, citizenship, and ancestry. Geiger concluded:

Multiple and complex identities may have been almost the rule, rather than the exception, in a part of the world where Hellenization, the Roman conquest, the return from Babylonian exile and the crystallisation of Jewish and of Samaritan identity, the turning of Aramaic into a lingua franca . . . among other factors, call up the image of the kaleidoscope rather than that of the mosaic or melting pot.²⁶⁸

All of this is consistent with Johnson Hodge's work cited earlier.²⁶⁹ She emphasizes Paul's "nested identities" which included both Jewish elements (e.g. a circumcised, descendant of Abraham) to which were added being a Jesus follower (in my terminology) and missionary to non-Judean, non-Jews.²⁷⁰ Johnson Hodge goes on to point out that these latter identities fall within Paul's "Judean boundaries," that they are

²⁶⁶ John M. G. Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews : Anomaly or Apostate?," *JSNT*, no. 60 (1995): 89-102, here 04-06.

²⁶⁷ Joseph Geiger, "Language, Culture and Identity in Ancient Palestine," in *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks: Studies in Cultural Interaction* (ed. E. N. Ostenfeld; ASMA; Aarhus, DK: Aarhus University Press, 2002), 233-46.

²⁶⁸ Geiger, "Language, Culture," 242.

²⁶⁹ Johnson Hodge, "Apostle to the Gentiles," 270-88.

²⁷⁰ Johnson Hodge, "Apostle to the Gentiles," 274-76.

consistent with earlier calls of the prophets to the nations of non-Jews.²⁷¹ This conclusion, however, is running ahead of my full argument.

Since it may be argued that Paul's statements quoted earlier concern his Jewish heritage before he became a follower of Jesus, the continuation of Paul's Jewish religious identity during his mission to the non-Judean, non-Jews must be established. When Paul chose to become a follower of Jesus, did he then choose to see himself as outside Judaism and recognize other Jews as members of an outgroup? It is important, then, to establish what kind of Jew Paul thought himself to be and how he presented this identity to the Romans.

In this work I want to make clear that I am considering Paul's *self-identity*: how did Paul characterize his own religious identity. In contrast to my emphasis on Paul's self-identity, John D. G. Barclay has explored how Paul was viewed by his contemporaries. He argues that among the first Pauline commentators were Paul's fellow Jews. It is clear to Barclay that many Jews who did not follow Jesus considered Paul an apostate and his practices antithetical to Judaism, principally because of Paul's insistence on eating with non-Jews. Barclay uses Paul's own testimony – the confrontation with Jews in Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14) and his five lashings in the synagogues (2 Cor. 11:24) – to argue this point.²⁷² In terms of social identity theory, Barclay finds that other Jews

²⁷¹ Johnson Hodge, "Apostle to the Gentiles," 276.

²⁷² Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews : Anomaly or Apostate?," 111-17. See also John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE -- 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 381-96. Barclay takes pains to remind the reader that the term "apostasy" is "a label, applied as a form of repudiation, not a neutral description of Paul's stance. . . ." Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews : Anomaly or Apostate?," 117.

considered Paul to be outside the ingroup of Jews. But this says nothing of Paul's own self-identity: into which group did Paul categorize himself? The punishments recorded in 2 Cor, for example, as easily can be cited for proof that Paul considered himself a Jew – why else would he subject himself to “40 lashes less one”?²⁷³

Those Who Find Paul Anti-Jewish/non-Jewish

Broadly speaking, most commentators on Paul describe him as either anti-Jewish, rejecting a Jewish identity, or pro-Jewish, and hence Jewish.²⁷⁴ E. P. Sanders in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* provides a short summary of the history of Pauline scholarship around these questions. At the time of publication, 1977, Sanders concluded that probably a majority saw Paul as antithetical to Judaism.²⁷⁵ While most (but not all) of these scholars worked in the pre-Shoah era, others, post-Shoah and post-Sanders, continue to argue that Paul was anti-Jewish. Daniel Boyarin argued in *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* that Paul's desire for the One, nourished by his Hellenistic surroundings, led him to reject diversity and, more specifically, the particularity of Judaism.²⁷⁶ Boyarin sees Paul rejecting the very aspects of their identity

²⁷³ Jörg Frey, “Paul's Jewish Identity,” in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (eds. J. Frey, et al.; AGJU; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 285-321, here 304.

²⁷⁴ Gerd Lüdemann classified commentators of Paul into three categories: those who found Paul Jewish, unJewish, or anti-Jewish. Gerd Lüdemann, *Paulus und das Judentum* (TEH; Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1983), 13-17. See also Love L. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* (LNTS; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 9-13.

²⁷⁵ Edward P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 2-12. That a majority probably found Paul antithetical to Judaism: pages 11-12.

²⁷⁶ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 7-9.

that make Jews unique –that make them Jews. This Pauline rejection of things Jewish is tantamount to a Pauline rejection of Jewishness itself, to being anti-Jewish.

In his own work, Sanders concluded that Paul believed that “the people of God are, in effect, a third entity which must be entered by Jew and Christian alike on the same ground.”²⁷⁷ This idea that Paul was forming a “third race” has been a common understanding of his writing from antiquity to contemporary scholarship. Denise Kimber Buell catalogued examples of this teaching from Clement of Alexandria, Athenagoras, and Justin Martyr.²⁷⁸ More recently, Love L. Sechrest, working primarily with Galatians, argues that Paul is writing to support his notion of a third race, neither Jew nor Greek, but Christian.²⁷⁹ At a minimum, were Paul self-identifying with a new religious ingroup, and no longer with the community of Jews, social identity theory would suggest that he would tend to discriminate against Jews “in the flesh” in favor of the new race. As a consequence, I would classify the “third race” views as ultimately anti-Jewish.

On the surface, one might not consider that James D. G. Dunn belongs in this category for he affirms in his 1988 commentary that “Paul was *a Jew*. He was born and

²⁷⁷ Edward P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), most explicitly at 29. In his earlier work, Sanders concluded: “In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity*.” Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 552. Lüdemann, at the time considering only *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, classifies Sanders as “un-Jewish” because Paul’s “pattern of religion” is simply not that of Palestinian Judaism but is something different. Lüdemann, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 16. Since Sanders finds Judaism and Paul’s beliefs incompatible, I prefer to categorize Sanders among those who consider Paul anti-Jewish.

²⁷⁸ Denise Kimber Buell, “Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition,” *HTR* 94, no. 4 (2001): 449-76, here 61-68.

²⁷⁹ Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*.

brought up a Jew.”²⁸⁰ In a later article devoted expressly to the question of Paul’s self identity, Dunn treats Paul’s identity as expressed in four terms. The first is “Jew,” and Dunn finds Paul rejected this as a self-identifier on an ethnic basis but not as a “lifestyle, a commitment to the ancestral customs of the Jews.”²⁸¹ Dunn believes that Paul rejected the identification of “in Judaism,” because of the “ethnic particularism” of Judaism, which had become too much associated with “separation from other nations.”²⁸² Dunn goes on to speak about the terms “Hebrew” and “Israelite.” The former term he seems to believe Paul adopted as a mark of his ancestral ties to the Judean homeland, equivalent to my term “Judean.”²⁸³ Dunn follows the general consensus that the term “Israelite” was an insider term (that is, applied to Jews by Jews) and identified the “historic . . . relation to God” without “reference to or distance from other nations.”²⁸⁴

Dunn’s article addresses the seeming ambiguities in Paul’s treatment of circumcision and food laws.²⁸⁵ In both cases, Dunn concludes that Paul was internalizing,

²⁸⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 1.xxxix.

²⁸¹ James D. G. Dunn, “Who Did Paul Think He Was? A Study of Jewish-Christian Identity,” *NTS* 45(1999): 174-93, especially 179-82, 192.

²⁸² Dunn, “Who Did Paul Think He Was?,” 183-85, 192.

²⁸³ Dunn, “Who Did Paul Think He Was?,” 185-87, 193.

²⁸⁴ Dunn, “Who Did Paul Think He Was?,” 187-89, quotation 188.

²⁸⁵ Dunn points out the continuing Jewishness of Paul’s language in identifying non-Jews by the state of their penis: “. . . his use of ‘circumcision’ and ‘uncircumcision’ in metonymy betrays a still characteristic Jewish perspective; what non-Jew would think to identify non-Jews by their uncut penis?” Dunn, “Who Did Paul Think He Was?,” 190. The fixation of Romans on the Jewish practice of circumcision (see above) suggests that at least Romans would identify Jew and non-Jew by the condition of his penis.

or spiritualizing, these markers of Jews so that their external observance was no longer required of non-Jew *or Jew*.²⁸⁶ Dunn goes on to observe that

such a reconfiguration of Jewish identity, particularly when set up as an either-or (internal/spiritual reality rendering unnecessary external/visible accompaniment), would hardly have been recognized by the great bulk of Paul's compatriots and would have made little sense to most onlooking [non-Jews].²⁸⁷

In this article as in his commentary, Dunn speaks of Paul's "conversion" ("Paul is the only first-century Pharisee *converted* to faith in Messiah Jesus . . ." and ". . . the dedicated Pharisee converted to become the dedicated Christian apostle, the leader of a mission to Gentiles . . .").²⁸⁸ Conversion involves a rejection of one worldview for another. While Dunn himself concludes that Paul's was "an identity in flux, still anchored in the historic, religious heritage of his people, but adapting to the demands of fresh revelation and to the compulsion to preach the gospel to other peoples . . .", Dunn's logic that Paul rejected continuation of the very markers which made Jews Jews, and the associated insistence that Paul "converted" to a new religion lead to a different conclusion: Paul rejected Judaism and, at the time of writing Rom was not a Jew.²⁸⁹ To my mind, the distinction between this view and that of those who assert that Paul saw "Christianity" as a new race is that Paul calls Jews to abandon their distinctive practices and become non-Jews: in my classification, Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. The agreement in the two views is that in Paul's perfect world, Jews would be extinct.

²⁸⁶ Dunn, "Who Did Paul Think He Was?," 190-91.

²⁸⁷ Dunn, "Who Did Paul Think He Was?," 191.

²⁸⁸ Dunn, "Who Did Paul Think He Was?," 175. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.xliii.

²⁸⁹ Dunn, "Who Did Paul Think He Was?," 193.

Those Who Find Paul Pro-Jewish/Jewish

Those who find Paul to be Jewish include W. D. Davies, writing shortly after the conclusion of World War II.²⁹⁰ Davies wrote:

We begin with the significant fact that throughout his life Paul was a practising Jew who never ceased to insist that his gospel was first to the Jews, who also expected Jewish Christians to persist in their loyalty to the Torah of Judaism, and who assigned to the Jews in the Christian not less than in the pre-Christian dispensation a place of peculiar importance.²⁹¹

Markus Barth, John Gager, Paul Gaston, and Francis Watson followed Davies in taking the position that Paul never left Judaism and his teachings are not to be construed as anti-Jewish.²⁹² Contrary to those who argue that Paul meant to form a new third race, Kimber Buell and Johnson Hodge have noted that Paul *prioritizes* ethnic identities – does not erase them, and that Paul’s priority is “Jew first and then Greek” (Rom. 1:16 and elsewhere).²⁹³

In her previously cited work, *Paul was not a Christian*, Eisenbaum included a sustained discussion of Paul’s religious identity. To rehearse her conclusions, Eisenbaum argued that Paul maintained his Jewish religious identity at the time of his call (not

²⁹⁰ W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1962).

²⁹¹ Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 321. Sanders devotes six pages to Davies’ work, raising issues about its extension into discussions of the essence of Judaism and Pauline thought respectively. Despite shortcomings, Davies work promoted Judaism as the background for reading Paul. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 7-12.

²⁹² Markus Barth, *Jesus, Paulus und die Juden* (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1967). John G. Gager, *The Origins of anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1987). Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

²⁹³ Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” *JBL* 123, no. 2 (2004): 235-51, especially 247-49.

conversion) to be an apostle to non-Judean non-Jews and throughout his missionary career, including the production of the letter to the Romans.²⁹⁴ We should note that Paul's own statements cited above in 2 Cor 11 and Phil 3, and Romans 11:1b ("For I myself am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin") are all cast in the present tense: Paul claims this identity at the time of the writing, and thus provides himself the first attestation to this proposition.²⁹⁵ We should also note that whenever Paul speaks of the salvation of Jews and non-Jews, Jews come first in the list, suggestive of Paul's pride in his Judaism.)²⁹⁶

Eisenbaum proceeds to demonstrate the "strains of continuity . . . the way in which he remained a typical Jew even after his experience of Jesus" in three respects.²⁹⁷ The first, key identity marker to which Eisenbaum returns again and again is the Jewish

²⁹⁴ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 5-9, 42, 132-49.

²⁹⁵ Sechrest argues that in the passage from Phil, Paul is *contrasting* his *current* religious identity as "in Christ Jesus," (v.3, 9) to his *previous* identity "in the flesh" when he refers to his circumcision and genealogy (vv. 4-5). As a consequence, she claims, the passage does not speak to a Jewish identity for Paul but for a new identity. Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race*, 145-49. A full response to her objection would take this work far afield. I would point out that (a) in this passage Paul apparently is responding to "Judaizers," those Jesus' followers who, as in Galatia, would convince non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus' followers that true salvation consists of following all the provisions of the Law. The change in audience will evoke a change in language and rhetorical emphasis. (b) It is not clear whether in v. 3 Paul's lack of confidence is in *his* ability to meet the demands of the Law or, as in Gal, in the ability of the *Philippians* to meet these requirements. (c) Paul has lost much, especially status within the Jewish community, because of his missionary vocation (see 2 Cor 11:24). This he would regard as rubbish in comparison with his vocation to bring the non-Judeans into worship of the God of Israel. (d) I would certainly admit that Paul believes that Jesus, a descendant of David, is the Messiah and, as a consequence, his Lord. Participation in Christ is a feature of Pauline soteriology well beyond the scope of this (or Sechrest's) work.

²⁹⁶ Romans 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:9; 10:12. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24; 12:13. Galatians 3:28.

²⁹⁷ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 150.

practice of aniconic monotheism.²⁹⁸ Her emphasis on this aspect of Judaism is consistent with the scholarly consensus. In a 1998 article, for instance, Larry Hurtado reviewed the scholarship on the question of Jewish monotheism as well as the texts involved and concluded that

. . . devout Jews proclaimed their faith in monotheistic professions which emphasize the universal sovereignty and uniqueness of the one God of Israel, and manifested a devotional pattern involving the reservation of cultic devotion (formal/liturgical “worship”) for this one God and a refusal to offer these cultic honours to other gods or even to the divine agents of God.²⁹⁹

More recently, Dunn makes the notable addition to the conversation in his observation that “an equally ancient perception lay at the root of Israel's hostility to idolatry -- the conviction that God is invisible, or, more precisely, *un-image-(in)able* (Exod. 20:4) and unlookable-on (Exod. 33:20),” underscoring the Jewish commitment to *aniconic* monotheism.³⁰⁰ This commitment to a single God whose image was never to be reproduced is enjoined in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:2-6; Deut 5:6-10), and enshrined in the Shema: “Hear O Israel, The LORD is our God, the LORD is one” (Deut 6:4). The insistence on this as *the* standard for Jews reverberates through the Hebrew Bible.³⁰¹ This

²⁹⁸ Nineteen indexed references for “aniconic monotheism” and “monotheism,” Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 306, 13.

²⁹⁹ Larry W. Hurtado, “First-Century Jewish Monotheism,” *JSNT*, no. 71 (1998): 3-26, here 25-26.

³⁰⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 68.

³⁰¹ Three examples from different parts of the Bible: the contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18), in the repetition of the Exodus formula (Psalm 81:15 MT, “I the LORD am your God who brought you up from Egypt”) and in Isa 43:3, “For I am the LORD your God, the holy one of Israel, your savior” (NRSV).

insistence on monotheism was noted, as we saw in the previous chapter, by Greco-Roman writers such as Varro, Strabo, and Livy.

Paul's commitment to monotheism is shown throughout his letters first by his use of the singular, Θεός, in references to God. Outside of Rom, Paul's monotheism is expressed most strikingly perhaps in 1 Cor 8:6a: "but for us there is one God from whom come all things and towards whom we are directed . . ." Paul uses the oneness of God polemically against his opponents in Gal 3:20: "Now there is no mediator when there is only one person, but God is one." In Rom 1, Paul addresses the stereotype of the idolatrous fornicating non-Jew, emphasizing first that God, singular, can be known through the created world (vv. 19-20) and that non-Jews have given themselves over to images of animals and men (v. 23). An important element in Paul's argument in Rom is that because there is one God, there will be one judge of Jews and non-Jews (3:30). Thus, throughout his letters Paul is committed to aniconic monotheism.

The second characteristic Eisenbaum lifts up is the link Jews ascribed between idolatry and sexual immortality.³⁰² In the account of the renewal of the covenant in Exodus 34:15-16, the Septuagint uses the verb ἐπορνεύω, signifying in the context both committing sexually immoral acts and worshipping false gods.³⁰³ Among other Biblical citations is the famous metaphor that the prophet Hosea provides: "the Lord said to Hosea 'Go, take a harlot wife and harlot's children, for the land gives itself to harlotry, turning

³⁰² Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 151-53.

³⁰³ I cite the LXX since this was probably the version familiar both to Paul and his audience. The MT uses הָנִיחַ, with a similar ambiguity of meaning.

away from the LORD” (NAB Hosea 1:2; also 3:1, 4:13).³⁰⁴ Wisdom of Solomon, as a production of the Diaspora in Greek, is an example closer yet to Paul. There the writer finds the beginning of fornication in the production of idols: “The purpose of idols is the instigation of fornication; their invention is the destruction of life” (Wisd 14:12).

The link between idolatry, which Jews assume is the religious practice of non-Jews, and sexual immorality appears often enough to be considered a Jewish stereotype by Paul’s time. Paul uses it several times in his letters in his description of the former lives of his converts. Outside of Romans, Paul praises the Thessalonians for their “loyalty to God” after they “turned from idols to the living and true God” (1 Thes 1:8, 9), reversing the movement Hosea described. In 1 Cor and Gal, Paul equates fornicators and idolaters (1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19). Galatians 2:15 has an especially striking example of this: “we by nature Jews and not sinners from the [other] nations” (ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνων ἁμαρτωλοί). We shall see later how he uses this same trope to establish a common identity with his Roman audience.

A third characteristic Eisenbaum cites of the typical Jew is a care for the scriptures and traditions of the religion of Israel.³⁰⁵ It seems hardly necessary to argue that a respect for scriptures was typical of a Jew in antiquity. The Book of Psalms opens with praise for the man who meditates on the Law and follows it (Ps 1). Nehemiah 8 is an account of the reading of the Law to all the people after their return from Babylon. The

³⁰⁴ Psalm 106 reprises the link shown in Exodus: “They worshipped their idols and were ensnared by them . . . They defiled themselves by their actions, became adulterers by their conduct” (vv. 36, 39). Jeremiah and Ezekiel repeat the link between idolatry and sexual immorality often (Jeremiah 3:9, 5:7, 7:9; Ezekiel 6:9, 23:37).

³⁰⁵ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 167-71.

people spent one day listening to the reading and its interpretation and a second in a festal celebration, so excited were they to have the Law. Philo and Josephus both record the Diaspora Sabbath practice of meeting to read and reflect on the scriptures. Josephus records a speech to Agrippa petitioning the confirmation of the right to observe the Sabbath “. . . dedicated to the learning of our customs and laws, we thinking it proper to reflect on them . . .” (A.J. XVI. ii.3 [Thackeray, LCL]; see Philo *Mos.* II. 215-16; *Leg.* 156).

While Paul has more direct quotations of Hebrew Scriptures in Romans than in any of the other undisputed letters, we should not discount his extensive use of the Hebrew Scriptures elsewhere. In the Corinthians correspondence and Gal, Paul makes 34 direct quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures.³⁰⁶ In his recounting of the story of Sarah and Hagar in Gal 4:21-31, Paul produces an extended exegesis of Gen 15-17, with an intertextual citation of Isa 54:1, a demonstration not only of Paul’s ability to proof-text his points but also to proof-text his proof-texts. Watson, in *Hermeneutics*, describes a three-way dialogue among the original Hebrew Scriptures, Paul, and Paul’s contemporary commentators and comments that “*Paul and his fellow-Jews read the same scriptural texts, the Torah and the prophets. . . . As a Jew, Paul is a reader of scripture alongside other readers.*”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ This count is based on the NA²⁷ enumeration of direct quotations. The enumeration excludes what may be a quotation of an undetermined apocryphal text introduced by δι’ ἡμῶς γὰρ ἐγράφη ὅτι (1 Cor 9:10). We should note that Paul’s use of scripture is not evenly spread across all of his letters. In fact, Paul includes no scriptural citations in Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, or Philemon, for reasons that are not immediately obvious.

³⁰⁷ Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 1.

A fourth characteristic of Jewish identity, not cited by Eisenbaum, was a connection with Jerusalem. Psalm 9:11 affirms that the LORD, the God of Israel, dwells in the midst of the people on Mt Zion (cf Ps 132:13) and Ps 84 extols the joys of living in the tabernacles and altars of the LORD. It is from Zion that the salvation will come to the people (Pss 14:7; 20:3; 53:6). Psalm 137 shows the deep sorrow of the people exiled from Jerusalem. Philo recounts the willingness of the people in Jerusalem to confront the Roman army over the desecration of the temple by Gaius (*Legat.*). Acts describes crowds from every nation at the feast of Pentecost, come as part of the pilgrimage feast (Acts 2:5, 9-11). Diaspora Jews also supported the temple with the Temple Tax, as recounted by Cicero (*Flac.*66-67.)

Paul's relationship with Jerusalem was not straight-forward. Acts remembers a number of appearances of Paul in Jerusalem, including his education there (22:3), participation in the council of Jerusalem (15:1 ff.), and his arrest in the temple (21:27 ff.). In Gal, Paul recounts his two journeys to Jerusalem after becoming a Jesus follower to consult with the leaders of the Jesus followers there (Gal. 1:18, 2:1-10). While Acts 2:46 records Jesus followers continuing to congregate in the Jerusalem temple, presumably to participate in prayer and sacrifice there, Paul never mentions the temple or Jerusalem in this way. Instead, Paul's most common references to the Jerusalem community involve the collection for the poor (Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 8:1-9, 15; Gal 2:10), a manifestation of the respect of Paul and his communities for the original community of Jesus followers.

Paul's other notable use of Jerusalem is polemic, in his reading of Gen 16. In Gal 4:25-26, Paul affirms that Hagar, the slave woman, corresponds to the physical Jerusalem, while Sarah corresponds to the "Jerusalem above," the mother of the freeborn. To be sure, Jews, whether Jesus followers or not, might well find this analogy insulting. On the other hand, Jörg Frey notes that:

In spite of the distancing remarks in Galatians 1, it is not without relevance for Paul that Jerusalem is the place where Christ was crucified and where those who were apostles before him were located (cf. 1 Cor 15:3-8). Therefore Paul made many efforts to maintain unity with the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem: he negotiated the agreement at the apostles' meeting (Gal 2:2), he organized the collection for the poor to the Jerusalem community, and finally he personally traveled to Jerusalem to deliver the gift even though he was well aware that his life was threatened (Rom 15:31). This confirms most clearly that Paul never abandoned the connection with Jerusalem and, even more, that the basic concept of his mission was thoroughly shaped by the Jewish view of the everlasting centrality of the Holy City.³⁰⁸

Barclay seconds Frey's argument, noting that the connection with Jerusalem changed for Jesus followers from a focus on the temple to a focus on the original community of apostles and Jesus followers.³⁰⁹ Following these observations, one can see that Paul maintained some sense of Jerusalem as the ideal community. It was in that connection, therefore, that Paul used Jerusalem in his exegesis of Gen 16 noted above. Jerusalem must be a holy place.

Thus, Paul called himself a Jew, wrote like a Jew, followed Jewish themes, referenced Jewish Scriptures, expressed a tie with Jerusalem, and held himself accountable to Jewish authorities (2 Cor 11:24). There is every reason to believe,

³⁰⁸ Frey, "Paul's Jewish Identity," 303-04.

³⁰⁹ Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 418-23.

therefore, that Paul considered himself a Jew. But what kind of a Jew? Amid the many sectarian divisions of 1st century Judaism, Paul was a Diaspora, Judean, Jewish Jesus follower, called by the God of Israel to be apostle to non-Judean, non-Jews. Francis Watson opens his monograph *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* with the statement:

Paul was a Jew. . . . Paul's Jewishness is now generally acknowledged, and indeed emphasized. But it is still a question how this factor can most fruitfully be put to use in the interpretation of his texts. And the answer, in general terms, is that a Jewish Paul must be shown to be engaged in critical dialogue with other Jews about a common heritage and identity.³¹⁰

While Watson goes on to show how Paul may be considered to be in dialogue with other Jewish writers, my concern is with Paul's dialogue with a particular audience, namely the implied audience for his letter to the Romans.

I argue that the audience Paul implied in Rom is composed of non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. Paul, a Judean Jewish Jesus follower, did not share their identity completely, just the elements of Jewish Jesus follower. In Rom, Paul emphasizes both of these features and ignores other features that in other contexts would place Paul and the audience in outgroups: Judean vs. non-Judean certainly, but perhaps affiliated with Asia Minor rather than Rome, probably differing levels of education, and so forth. In this emphasis of commonality, Paul relies on the process of cross categorization, the process by which some members of an ingroup recognize a shared group category with members of what would otherwise be an outgroup.³¹¹ In this instance, I will show that Paul relies

³¹⁰ Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 1.

³¹¹ Jean-Claude Dechamps and Willem Doise, "Crossed Category Memberships in Intergroup Relations," in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. H. Tajfel; London: Academic Press, 1978), 141-58.

on the shared category of Jewish Jesus followers and that shared category he thought sufficient to permit him to negate any prejudice against non-Jews (Paul's apostolic field) among the Jews in his audience.

Paul's References to the Audience

Throughout Romans, Paul makes statements about the audience: in chs. 1-15 in references either to geographic or religious ethnicity and in ch. 16 in requests to be remembered to individually named members. These references reflect the way Paul conceives of the audience, the implied audience. These references, then, contain important information for the development of my argument and, as they come from the text itself, hold a privileged position in the reconstruction of the audience. I will treat first Paul's references in ch. 16 to named individuals – what can we discern from these references about the audience – and then turn to the principal references to the audience in chs. 1-15.

Paul's References to Individuals in Romans 16

Any information from the list of names Paul cites in the letter surely should be privileged over almost all other information. The names will give limited information about the actual historical audience for Rom, and we may assume that this sample will influence Paul's construction of the *implied* audience which is my target. Unfortunately, one cannot immediately extrapolate from the list of names in ch. 16 to the entire audience. The most obvious reason for caution is the difficulty in moving from a list of

about two dozen names to a group of unknown size.³¹² Nevertheless, there is still much that can be gleaned from the list.

In Table 1, I have compiled the relevant information on the individuals named in Rom. 16, beginning with the verse in which the individual is named. This is followed in columns citing the name of the individual, and then the language from which the name is derived (e.g., Mary, or Μαρία in v. 6 is written in Greek but has a Hebrew origin). This is followed by an estimation of the social status associated with the name, whether free or slave. Individuals with name of Greek or Hebrew origins are assumed to come from the

³¹² While we have no data on the number of Jesus' followers either worldwide or in Rome when Paul wrote, I have concluded that the size of the Roman community may not have exceeded 100 persons. I reached this conclusion from two calculations.

The first method is based on the work of Rodney Stark who estimated the growth of the number of Jesus' followers in the first three centuries. Stark has pointed out that the total number of all Jesus' followers throughout the Empire need not have exceeded 1,000 in the year 40 (2,000 when Paul wrote) to have grown to 10 percent of the population of the Roman Empire (6 million out of 60 million) by the time of Constantine, a widely accepted estimate of both the total population and the population of Christians in the early fourth century. This growth would occur at an average growth rate of 40 percent per decade (3.4 percent per year), equal to the growth rate in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from its inception to the 1990's. (Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 3-13.) If the total number of Jesus followers did not exceed 2,000, how many might we ascribe to Rome? Paul himself wrote to or about 10 communities: Jerusalem (Rom 15:19, 25; 1 Cor 16:3; Gal 1:17-18; 2:1-10), Damascus (2 Cor 11:32; Gal 1:17), Antioch (Gal 2:11), Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8;), Galatia, Philippi, Thessaloniki, Philippi, Athens (1 Thess 3:1), and Corinth, all in the eastern portion of the Empire. In addition to these communities, it is reasonable to believe that there were unnamed communities of Jesus' followers which lay within the geographic orbit of these Pauline communities as well as communities stretching south from Jerusalem to Egypt. With the concentration of Jesus' followers in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, an estimate of 100, approximately 5 percent of the total, in Rome is not unreasonably small, and may be generous.

My second method is to work backwards from an estimate of the number of Roman Jesus followers in the mid-third century. Robert M. Grant estimated the population of Roman Jesus followers starting from the 1650 persons (clergy, widows, etc.) supported by the Roman Church in 251 C.E. Grant estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 would be needed to support that number. (Robert M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society: Seven Studies* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977], 6-7.) Assuming (1) a 20,000 population and (2) an Empire wide average annual growth rate of the community of Jesus' followers of 3.4 percent held to Rome as well, back calculating the population of the Roman community in 65 at the time of Nero's persecution gives a population of Roman Jesus' followers of 38. Saying the same thing differently, if the community of Jesus' followers in Rome at the conclusion of the Neroian persecution constituted 38 persons, then, at an average annual growth rate of 3.4 percent, the community would have grown to 20,000 persons in 251. Assuming the persecution in 65 was devastating but did not annihilate the community, it is not unreasonably penurious to assume that the population 8 years earlier was approximately three times that number, or 100 persons.

eastern portion of the empire. Paul cites previous contacts with certain individuals. The last column provides the estimate as to which of the individuals may be identified from the text as Judean or not. Thus, Aquila bears a Latin name associated with a freeborn individual. On the basis of Acts 18:2, it is assumed that he is from Asia Minor and on the basis of these citations and other Pauline letters, a previous colleague of Paul's.

Table 2
Names in Rom 16³¹³

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Status of</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Eastern</u> <u>Origin</u>	<u>Previous</u> <u>Encounter</u>	<u>Judean</u>
3	Prisca	Latin	Freeborn		Yes	
	Aquila	Latin	Freeborn	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Epenaetus	Greek		Yes		Yes?
6	Mary	Hebrew				Yes
7	Andronicus	Greek		Yes	Yes	Yes
	Junia	Latin	Slave	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Ampliatius	Latin	Slave		Yes	
9	Urbanus	Latin	Freeborn	Yes	Yes	
	Stachys	Greek		Yes		
10	Apelles	Greek		Yes		
	Aristobulus	Greek				Yes?
11	Herodion	Greek	Slave	Yes	Yes?	Yes
	Narcissus	Greek				
12	Tryphaena	Greek	Slave			
	Tryphosa	Greek	Slave			
	Persis	Greek	Slave	Yes		
13	Rufus	Latin	Freeborn		Yes	Yes
	His mother				Yes	Yes
14	Asyncritus	Greek		Yes		
	Phlegon	Greek		Yes		
	Hermes	Greek				
	Patrobas	Greek		Yes		
	Hermas	Greek	Slave	Yes		
15	Philologus	Greek		Yes		
	Julia	Latin	Slave			
	Nereus	Greek	Slave			
	His sister					
	Olympas	Greek		Yes		

³¹³ Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 153-83. Peter Lampe, "The Roman Christians of Romans 16," in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 216-30, here 227-29. Jewett, *Romans*, 952-53.

Of the 28 individuals Paul references, he identifies two, Aristobulus and Narcissus, as heads of households that include Jesus followers, with no indication that either are themselves Jesus followers (Rom 16:10, 11). Though never in Rome, Paul explicitly cites previous contact with eight of the remaining 26 (Prisca, Aquila, Andronicus, Junia, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Rufus, and Rufus's mother), from his ministry in the Eastern Mediterranean. Jewett adds seven more to this list as "[c]lose personal and coworkers in the Pauline and other mission fields" (Epeanetus, Miriam, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphaina, Tryphosa, and Persis).³¹⁴ His level of familiarity with the other 11 persons was probably much less, exemplified by the lack of anything specific Paul has to say about them. Of the 26, then, Paul was familiar with 15 individuals.

The names of those Paul mentions have been studied at length with the conclusion that this collection does not fit the general population of Jews in Rome. Of the 26 Jesus followers, two are unnamed, the mother of Rufus and the sister of Nereus. Of the 24 named individuals, seven have Latin names, 16 Greek names, and one Hebrew name.³¹⁵ This linguistic distribution is essentially the reverse of the distribution of names in the Jewish catacombs, where the percentage of Latin names nearly exceeds the combined percentage of Greek and Hebrew names. In addition, Peter Lampe used records of names in ancient Rome to determine the frequency of the use of these names and estimated 14 of

³¹⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 952.

³¹⁵ Sixteen Greek names: Epenaetus, Andronicus, Stachys, Apelles, Herodion, Tryphaeneia, Tryphosa, Persis, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Nereus, Olympas. Seven Latin names: Prisca, Aquila, Junia, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Rufus, Julia. One Hebrew name: Miriam. Jewett, *Romans*, 953.

the 24, or about 60 percent, were immigrants to Rome (“Yes” in the column headed “Eastern Origin?”).³¹⁶ Of these only three have Latin names, while 12 are Greek.³¹⁷

In theory, Paul’s audience could include among the Jesus followers Judeans, non-Judeans, Jews, non-Jews, and all the permutations possible. This list of names does not provide definitive information as to the numbers in each categorization. Seven individuals are classed as Judean: Miriam by her name; three (Andronicus, Junia, and Herodion) on the basis that Paul refers to them as συγγενής (*kins[wo]man*); Aquila on the basis of Acts 18:2; Rufus and his mother on the basis that Paul would only refer to a Judean woman as “my mother” (whether meant literally or metaphorically), making her other son, Rufus, also Judean. These seven constitute about one quarter of the total named, surely a much higher proportion of Judeans in this group than Judeans in the total Roman population. Must we also conclude, however, that none of the other 19 is a Judean? This would be far too facile a solution.

³¹⁶ Lampe, “The Roman Christians of Romans 16,” 226-27. On page 227, Lampe says “about 14 people . . . were . . . presumably not born in Rome.” It appears that, for this purpose, Lampe is only counting those 14 based on the frequency of mention of their names. To this number I have added Junia based on Paul’s identification of her as a kinsman, fellow prisoner (hence resident outside Rome) “prominent among the apostles,” and a Jesus’ follower before Paul.

Of the 15 identified as particularly close to Paul, only 5 have names associated with the East.

If indeed a large proportion of those Paul names are immigrants to Rome, then it is likely that they were not citizens of the city, as immigration reform during the principate of Augustus made citizenship more difficult to obtain. As immigrants and non-citizens, they would have enjoyed no protection from summary exile, while the majority of Judeans in Rome probably did enjoy this protection. This reinforces my objection to Das’s detailed reconstruction (and the less detailed reconstruction of many scholars) that the Edict of Claudius implies the exile of the protected population, Judean Jewish Jesus followers, and the continued presence in Rome of the unprotected population, non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. Based on Paul’s salutations, there would have been an ample number from among even the list of Jesus followers in ch. 16 who fit the latter description.

³¹⁷ For those keeping track, the remaining 9 then have 4 Latin, 4 Greek, and 1 Hebrew names.

First of all, there is no way to identify the geographic ethnicity of the other seven identified as slaves because they have typical “slave names,” the same way that Lampe identified Junia and Herodion as slaves even though they are also identified as Judeans. Slave names are identified as slave names because they are typical of slaves without regard to their ethnogeographic identity. Hence we can infer nothing about their identity from their names.

In the second place, names of Judeans in the Diaspora were related to their place of birth. Leonard V. Rutgers’ 1995 study described the Judean onomastic practices in three parts of the Mediterranean : Rome (based on evidence from the catacombs), Egypt (*fiscus Judaicus* from Apollinopolis Magna), and Galilee (funerary inscriptions from Beth She‘arim).³¹⁸ In the two Diaspora locations, non-Semitic names were the norm. In Rome, Latin names dominated with Greek names exceeding Hebrew. In Egypt, on the other hand, Greek names dominated; Semitic names again were in the minority. Not surprisingly, Semitic names predominated in Galilee. Rutgers’ work makes it impossible to assert with confidence that because we can identify the language of origin of the name of any Jesus follower from the East we can categorize the individual as Judean or not.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Rutgers, *Jews in Late Ancient Rome*, 139-75. See also Naomi G. Cohen, “Jewish Names as Cultural Indicators in Antiquity,” *JSJ* 7(1976): 97-128. Cohen summarized earlier studies and analyzed the incidence of “Jewish” names in various geographic areas. Cohen concluded that “Hellenistic, Roman and oriental-Semitic influences were responsible for their specific chronological and geographical distribution . . .” Cohen, “Jewish Names,” 128.

³¹⁹ Rutgers also points out that even within a family onomastic practice was not uniform. Siblings may have names from different languages and names would vary in nationality from generation to generation (e.g., Greek in the first generation, Latin and Hebrew in the second, and Greek again in the third). Rutgers, *Jews in Late Ancient Rome*, 149-50. As a consequence, one cannot surely identify Andronicus (Greek name) and Junia (Latin name) as siblings, spouses, parent and child, or just acquaintances though they were in prison with Paul and worked with him.

Paul is a prime example of this: a Judean Jewish Jesus follower with a Greek name.

Epaenetus appears to be an example of a Jew (whether Judean or not) with a Greek name, since Paul identifies him (v. 5) as “the first fruits in Asia for Christ.” Epaenetus’s early espousal of Jesus would suggest that he was very close to Judaism if not in fact a Jew.

Without knowing anything more about the size of the entire Roman community of Jesus followers, it is hazardous to extrapolate from the evidence in ch. 16 to the entire population. The citations are probably skewed towards those of eastern origin simply because Paul addresses so many persons with whom he is familiar from his work in the East. The working relationship Paul had with the seven Judean Jesus followers (one-third of those named) *suggests* that they too were Judean *Jewish* Jesus followers: genealogically linked to Israel (hence Judean), probably born and raised in the religion of Israel (Jewish) and accepting Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of the God of Israel (Jesus followers). Beyond this, study of the names in ch. 16 provides few indisputable facts about the whole community in Rome and the audience for Rom. As a consequence, the most important finding is simply that the number of people with whom Paul previously worked suggests that he could have accurate insight into the composition and dynamics of the Roman community of Jesus followers.

Paul’s References to the Audience’s Ethnicity in Chapters 1-15

I identify seven references in chs. 1-15 to the audience’s geographic and/or religious ethnicity. The majority of scholars argue that the weight of these references strongly implies that the audience is composed of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. They find particular support in the four places that Paul uses the term ἔθνος in

relation to the audience: 1:5-6; 1:13; 11:13; 15:15-16. Other scholars find these references ambiguous and leave open the possibility that the audience is composed of Jewish Jesus followers. These concerns are not assuaged by the other three references, two that are quite similar, 6:7 and 15:7, and one that is usually taken to imply a Jewish audience, 7:1. In analyzing these references, I will first address the four references which are thought to most strongly indicate a non-Judean, non-Jewish audience. Then I will consider the latter three references. Finally, I will exegete in detail Rom 1:1-6 which includes the first reference of interest. I choose a more thorough study of this section because as the introduction to the entire letter it is the section on which Paul doubtless expended the greatest care.

I translate the four verses considered most averse to my position below. For reasons set out in ch. 1 above, I have translated ἔθνη according to its context, as either non-Judean non-Jews or simply non-Jews.

. . . through whom [Jesus] we have received grace and apostleship for the sake of the obedience of faith for the sake of his name, among all the non-Judean non-Jews among whom are you also [ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐν οἷς ἔστε καὶ ὑμεῖς], the chosen of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:5-6).

I want you to know, brothers, that I have wanted for a long time to come to you (but have been prevented until now) in order that I might have some fruit as with you as with the rest of the non-Judean non-Jews [ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν] (Rom. 1:13).

Now I am discussing with you non-Jews [ὑμῖν δε λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν] (Rom. 11:13a).

I wrote to you boldly, in part as reminding you through the grace given to me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the non-Judean non-Jews [εἰς τὰ ἔθνη], acting as a servant to the gospel of God, in order that their [τῶν ἔθνῶν] gift, having been consecrated in a spirit of holiness, might become acceptable (Rom. 15:15-16).

In 1:5-6, the first citation, many scholars interpret the parallel prepositional phrases, “among all the non-Judean non-Jews” and “among whom are you also” to mean that you, the audience, also are to be counted among the non-Judean non-Jews.³²⁰ The phrase is ambiguous, since it could refer not to their religious ethnicity but to their place of residence, among the non-Judean, non-Jewish Romans. Dunn admits this ambiguity but nevertheless concludes that the phrase is “probably one of the clearest indications that the Roman congregations were largely gentile.”³²¹

A similar argument is used for the second citation. In 1:13, scholars read “with you as with the rest of the non-Judean non-Jews” as indicating that the audience is to be included among the non-Judean non-Jews. Dunn finds that “strongly Gentile [i.e., non-Judean, non-Jewish] composition of the Roman congregation is clearly implied.”³²²

It is in the third citation, 11:13a, that many find the clearest indication that this is a non-Jewish audience, as Paul addresses them so directly. Jewett notes that it is “an indication of the likely majority of the congregation.”³²³ Dunn again finds “the fact that Paul is clearly writing to gentiles . . . is obvious from 11:13-32.”³²⁴

³²⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 1.18-19. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 238. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 14-15. Lampe, “The Roman Christians of Romans 16,” 225, n. 37. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 11. Stowers, *Rereading*, 21, 43, 203. Stuhlmacher, “Purpose,” 235. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 37.

³²¹ Dunn, *Romans*, 1.18-19. Steve Mason’s assertion of ambiguity of the phrase is discussed below.

³²² Dunn, *Romans*, 1.32. Those cited immediately above regarding 1:5-6 arrive at the same conclusions regarding 1:13.

³²³ Jewett, *Romans*, 678.

³²⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 1.xlv; see also 2.655. Also F. F. Bruce, “The Romans Debate -- Continued,” in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; Peabody Mass.: Hendrickson Publishing, 1991), 175-194, here 180, n.24. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 612. Lampe, “The Roman Christians of Romans 16,” 225, n.4. Sanday and

The fourth citation (15:15-16) is viewed as providing Paul's rationale for writing to Rome at all: his commission from God is to the "Gentiles."³²⁵ Scholars reason that the only way Paul can justify his writing to Rome is if it is a non-Judean non-Jewish community of Jesus followers. As Stowers puts it, "Paul presents himself as the apostle to the gentile peoples, writing to a community of gentiles about their situation as gentiles."³²⁶

Despite these arguments, there is not unanimous assent to interpreting these references as proving that the implied audience of Romans is composed of (a super-majority or exclusively) non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. Steve Mason expands on Dunn's admission of ambiguity in 1:5-6.³²⁷ As so often happens, interpretation turns on the translation of a Greek preposition, in this case *ἐν*. Does Paul mean that the audience, "you," is to be *counted among* the non-Judean non-Jews, or, as Mason argues, does Paul mean that the Romans *reside among* the Gentiles? Mason argues for the latter interpretation: "Paul does not say that the Romans *are* Gentiles any more than he says that he is a Gentile. Both he and his readers are called to be *among* the Gentiles."³²⁸

Headlam, *Romans*, 324. Stowers, *Rereading*, 21, 102. Cranfield takes a more cautious approach. "Neither this sentence nor anything else in this section indicates whether Gentile Christians formed the majority or only a minority of the Roman church at this time," adding in a footnote "Though it has sometimes been claimed that this section shows conclusively that Paul expected the majority of the church in Rome to be Gentiles." Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.559.

³²⁵ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.754. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 711. Jewett, *Romans*, 905-06. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 49-50.

³²⁶ Stowers, *Rereading*, 203.

³²⁷ Mason, "Not Ashamed," 254-87, especially 268-76.

³²⁸ Mason, "Not Ashamed," 269.

As for 1:13, Mason argues that the “rest of the non-Judeans” refers to those in Spain and the West in contrast to his previous missionary work in the East: Paul “will harvest some fruit both among the Judean-Christians of Rome, in passing, and then continue the mission for which he was called among the western *Gentiles*.”³²⁹ He further argues that the explicit second person plural reference in 11:13 refers to those who are “the fruits of his Gentile mission (9.30; 10.19; 11.11-12, 13b) who have come into salvation . . . He addresses them directly here, in imaginary convocation, for obvious rhetorical effect.”³³⁰ Mason notes that the reference in 15:15-16 follows “a string of four proof texts for *Gentile* salvation, which all feature the word ‘Gentiles’ (15.9-12). Those who accept scripture as normative, evidently, ought then to accept the Gentiles. There is nothing here about welcoming Judeans.”³³¹

Two passages often overlooked provide references to the history of the religious identity of the audience and arguably imply that the audience is composed of non-Judeans who have adopted the worship of the God of Israel. The first occurs at 6:17 ff. where Paul talks of the audience members as former slaves to sin and abject lawlessness (v. 19) but now as slaves to God. The implication here is that the audience has experienced a movement from sinfulness to righteousness. This is a theme Paul uses elsewhere in his letters in describing audiences that are clearly non-Judean.

³²⁹ Mason, “Not Ashamed,” 270.

³³⁰ Mason, “Not Ashamed,” 274.

³³¹ Mason, “Not Ashamed,” 276.

Later, at 15:7, Paul exhorts the audience to “. . . welcome one another, as Christ also welcomed you *into the glory of God*.” At 9:4 Paul affirmed that his kinsmen are “Israel” and “theirs . . . the glory.” Now at 15:7 we learn that Christ has welcomed the audience “into the glory of God.” As there is but one God and therefore only one glory, the audience has now received, and by implication did not have in the past, the glory that is the birthright of Israel. Thus, Christ has welcomed those not previously Israel into the glory of Israel, that is, into the Jewish polity. Both 6:17 and 15:17, then, describe a change in status of the audience, from non-Judean non-Jews (and so by implication, idolaters) to non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers.

The seventh and final reference occurs at 7:1, when Paul refers to the audience as “knowing the law” (γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ). “Those knowing the law” is most easily explained as referring to those knowing the Law of Moses, i.e., Jews, since non-Jews knew so little of the Jewish Scriptures. This reference would seem to have as much weight, *a priori*, to support a Jewish audience as any of the other citations read as reference to non-Judean non-Jews.

I believe that much of the controversy around this issue is caused by the ambiguity in the language used, even beyond that identified with translating the preposition ἐν in 1:5-6. The ambiguity extends to the Greek term ἔθνη, used with multiple denotations and connotations. Scholars on all sides assign an unwarranted equivalence to the terms “non-Judean” and “idolater.” The equivalence is unwarranted because proselytes to Judaism did not thereby cease to be Romans or Syrians just as Jewish apostates did not thereby cease to be Judean. Once this equivalence is recognized as false,

Paul can now speak to non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. That construction honors both direct addresses to “you” in 7:1 and 11:3. The members of the audience are both Jews well trained in the Law and non-Judeans. To demonstrate the power of this insight and its consonance with the text, I exegete the opening paragraph, Rom 1:1-6, including the first reference to the audience as ἔθνη.

Rom 1:1-6: Addressed to Non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers

In these verses, Paul introduces himself to an audience, some percentage of whom he knows, whose assistance he now deems important enough to dispatch a letter delivered by Phoebe, his benefactor and a community leader in Cenchrae (Rom 16:2). We should assume, therefore, that these verses were among the most carefully crafted in the letter, for Paul must here secure the good will of his audience towards himself and his mission(s).³³² He does so by describing Jesus Christ as well as his own work in ways unique to Rom, indeed even contradicting his earlier letters, in order to portray himself and his message as thoroughly rooted in Jewish writings and experience. At the same time, the reference in vv. 5-6 to the audience as “among the ἔθνη” moves us to consider the audience as non-Judean. Thus, the opening paragraph of Rom demonstrates that Paul’s implied audience is composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

³³² In ancient rhetorical works, the opening, the “exordium” or προοίμιον, was meant to do exactly this: “to win goodwill and make the listener receptive and attentive.” R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory* (CBET; Kampen, Netherlands: Peeters, 1999), 69. Ancient writers on letters, however, generally ignored the tripartite division used in rhetorical theory, focusing instead on the letter’s “rhetorical situation,” and the appropriate literary style to accompany it. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 114-117. Malherbe’s compendium, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, includes ample justification for Anderson’s comments. Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1988). See especially Demetrius *De Elocutione*, Ps.-Demetrius, *Τύποι Ἐπιστολικοί* and Ps.-Libanius, *Ἐπιστολιμαῖοι Χαρακτῆρες*. Demetrius writes of the style of letters, that they should be “plain,” while Ps.-Demetrius suggests 21 types of letters and Ps.-Libanius some 41.

I translate these verses as follows (NA²⁷ shown below for reference):

¹Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, marked off for the good news of God ²promised through his prophets in sacred writings ³about his son the one born from the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ [but] according to a spirit of holiness decreed [ὀρισθέντος] in power, through [the] resurrection from among the dead, son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship for the sake of the obedience of faith for the sake of his name, among all the nations, ⁶among whom are you also, the chosen of Jesus Christ. . .

¹Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, ²ὃ ποιεπηγγέιλαιτο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις ³περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, ⁴ τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, ⁵δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ⁶ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Compared with many translations, I have made choices to modify the English word order from that found in Greek in order to group certain ideas. This includes highlighting the parallel phrases “according to the flesh”/“according to a spirit of holiness” (vv. 3-4) and “among all the nations”/“among whom are you also” (vv. 5-6) and juxtaposing “son of God,” with “Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 4). I translate ὀρισθέντος as “decreed,” compared with the NRSV’s “declared” and the NAB’s “established.” In that decision, I follow Leslie Allen’s analyses of the use of ὀρίζω in the royal Psalm 2:7, decreeing the installation and consecration of the king, and in the New Testament as referring to Jesus as the Son of God.³³³

³³³ Leslie C. Allen, “Old Testament Background of (προ)ορίζειν in the New Testament,” *NTS* 17, no. 1 (1970): 104-08. Jewett, *Romans*, 104.

In these first six verses, I find a number of cross references, enriching, but complicating, an exegesis. Paul refers to himself as a “slave of Christ Jesus” (v.1). “Slave” is not an unique self-description for Paul: elsewhere he calls himself a slave of Christ (Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1) and a slave of the Corinthians (2 Cor 4:5). As a slave of Christ Jesus, Paul echoes references to Moses, prophets, and all of Israel as servants/slaves of the LORD.³³⁴ A particularly apt reference is to two of the Isaiahan servant oracles, Isaiah 42:1 and 49:1-7. Both make reference to the servant going out to bring the message of God to the nations, a role Paul doubtless saw himself fulfilling, as he refers to his mission as securing the “obedience of faith for the sake of his name, among all the nations” (v. 5).

In fact, this missional purpose has other cross references throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Don Garlington has catalogued and analyzed 13 passages from the Hebrew Scriptures “concerning the coming Davidic king who would claim the nations as his own.”³³⁵ Of these 13 references, five are from the prophets (Isa 9:1-7; 11; 19:9-24; 2 Sam. 7 and Zech. 9:9-10). These texts match closely the terms of reference of Paul’s vocation, to bring “about the obedience of faith *of all the Gentiles*,” surely a daunting scope of mission but one deeply embedded in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Paul’s claim in verse 2 that his “good news” was “promised through [God’s] prophets” does not have a parallel outside Rom. In his other letters, the gospel is a fresh

³³⁴ Moses: Exodus 4:10; Joshua 1:1; Nehemiah 10:29. Prophets: Jeremiah 7:25; Ezekiel 38:17; Amos 3:7. All Israel: Leviticus 25:55; Deuteronomy 32:36; Isaiah 49:1-8; Jeremiah 30:10; Ezekiel 28:25. Dunn has other similar references including from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dunn, *Romans*, 7.

³³⁵ Don Garlington, “Israel’s Triumphant King: Romans 1:5 and the Scriptures of Israel,” in *Jesus and Paul: Global Perspectives in Honor of James D. G. Dunn. A Festschrift for His 70th Birthday* (eds. B. J. Oropeza, et al.; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 171-83, here 181.

proclamation of good tidings and is in no way linked to the Jewish Scriptures. In fact, his statement here seems to contradict Galatians 1:11-12: “I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not human; for I did not receive it from a human nor was it taught, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” The gospel in Galatians that was neither of human origin nor taught was promised by the prophets in Romans.³³⁶

An imperfect parallel to the prophetic foretelling of Christ’s mission does occur at Rom 15:8-12, where Paul again places in close proximity the themes of Christ’s servanthood and the promises of the ancestors. Paul elaborates on Christ’s role as a servant, in two critical verses I translate here: “. . . Christ became a servant of the circumcision (διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς) for the sake of the truth of God, to realize the promises to the ancestors that the non-Judeans will praise God on account of his mercy” (τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων τὰ δεῖ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν) (Rom. 15:8-9a). I understand “servant of the circumcision” to refer to Christ’s role as acting within the Jewish community in furtherance of its goals. By using the perfect form, γεγενῆσθαι, of the verb γίνομαι, Paul implies that Christ’s status as servant of the circumcision continues forward to Paul’s day.³³⁷ The NAB, NRSV, Jewett, and other

³³⁶ This same thought is contained in the “thesis of Romans” at Romans 1:16-17. Here, Paul uses the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. This is now understood to reflect a progression of the faith, whether from Christ to the current believers, from God to the current followers, or from Abraham and other Jews through Judean Jewish Jesus followers to non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. In the context of Paul’s statement that God’s gospel was first promised through God’s prophets (Rom 1:1-2) the interpretation of the progression through the Hebrew Scriptures to Paul’s current addressees in Rome becomes more compelling. These statements become reinforcing attestations of the dependence of Paul’s audience on a Jewish religious heritage.

³³⁷ NA²⁷ records a textual variant, γενέσθαι, the aorist rather than the perfect form of the verb. The variant enjoys less authoritative witnesses (B, C* D* F G Ψ 630 1739 1881 *pc*) than the text used (ⲛ A C D² 048 33 *Maj*; Epiph). Cranfield argues that the perfect is the more difficult, and hence preferred reading.

commentators follow this translation.³³⁸ Christ's role, in other words, is to fulfill the promises God made to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and fulfill the prophecies that all the nations would worship the God of Israel. These promises are then cited in the following catena of verses (Rom 15: 9-12). Drawing on Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah, Paul carefully edited the quotations to remove their original chauvinistic, imperialistic underpinnings and to make his point that the scriptures foretold that nations were to worship with the Jews.

As with Paul's statement about the relationship of his gospel to the Jewish prophets, this construction of Christ's and Paul's mission flowing from the religion of Israel is essentially unparalleled in the other undisputed letters. In Gal, for example, Paul describes Jesus Christ as "rescuing us from the present evil age" (Gal 1:4), without reference to the Hebrew prophets and without subjecting the Galatians to obedience to the God of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Paul's own former life of persecution of the Church of God is linked to his zealousness for the traditions of his ancestors (Gal 1:13-14). So traditions that in Gal led Paul to persecute the Church are in Rom fulfilled in the missions of Jesus Christ and of Paul.

Verses 3-4 provide more material Jewish Jesus followers would appreciate, for the creedal affirmation in these verses is widely considered by contemporary scholars to

Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.741. Smyth on the aspect of the perfect: The "stage of the action [denoted by the perfect stem is] completed action with permanent result", . . . "The perfect denotes a completed action the effects of which still continue in the present" [paragraphs 1852, 1945]. Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 413, 34. On both the text critical issue and the aspect of the perfect, see Jewett, *Romans*, 886, 890.

³³⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 886.

have originated in a Jewish Jesus-following confessional statement.³³⁹ While a detailed reconstruction of the confession's development from its original contents is a matter of contention, Rom 1:3-4 is understood to provide an early, non-confrontational statement of Paul's gospel.³⁴⁰ Coming at the very beginning of the letter, Dunn writes that it demonstrates to Paul's readers "that he shares with them, as with those who were believers before him, a common faith and gospel."³⁴¹ Jewett has a variation on this, as he finds that Paul's quotation "signals [Paul's] . . . intent to find common ground in the letter as a whole" with disparate groups in Rome.³⁴²

I contend that a reconstruction of disparate Jewish and non-Jewish groups contending in Rome cannot be validated by the historical, external evidence, as demonstrated in chapter 2. Paul is concerned, however, about those in Rome who dispute

³³⁹ Käsemann, *Romans*, 10-11, 13. Joshua W. Jipp, "Ancient, Modern, and Future Interpretations of Romans 1:3-4: Reception History and Biblical Interpretation," *JTI* 3, no. 2 (2009): 241-59, here 243. Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "Preaching the Gospel in Rome: A Study of the Epistolary Framework of Romans," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans* (eds. L. A. Jervis and P. Richardson; JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 337-66, here 342. Jewett summarized and analyzed the commentaries to the early 1980's in Robert Jewett, "The Redaction and Use of an Early Christian Confession in Romans 1:3-4," in *The Living Text* (eds. D. E. Groh and R. Jewett; New York: University Press of America, 1985), 99-122. This he summarized and updated in his commentary. Jewett, *Romans*, 97-98, 103-08. Mason does not directly contradict this interpretation of the verses but does contend that Paul "is making a programmatic statement that sets the pace for what will follow from [1:16], . . . : he is out to explain and defend the 'euangelion of God' among readers who have not yet accepted it." Mason, "Not Ashamed," 281.

³⁴⁰ Jewett takes a "maximum redaction" position: Paul modified the original statement to correct the shortcomings of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. Jewett, *Romans*, 103. Taking a contrary position, Dunn argues that Paul used the quotation to demonstrate his common belief with the Romans and would not have used the same statement to demonstrate this solidarity and simultaneously correct their belief. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.11-14.

³⁴¹ Dunn, *Romans*, 1.5. Dunn does not go on, however, to draw the conclusion of Ambrosiaster, that the gospel of the Romans derived from a Jewish teaching.

³⁴² Jewett, *Romans*, 108.

his gospel, namely groups who have heard about his “law free” gospel to non-Jews.³⁴³ As Dunn has said, Paul’s restatement of the creed with a Jewish origin helps to establish Paul’s identification with the belief systems of the audience.

If these verses are not taken from an earlier creed, Paul’s characterization of Jesus as “born from the seed of David according to the flesh” is doubly remarkable. Within the Pauline corpus, David is only mentioned in Rom (1:3; 4:6; 11:9). Paul refers to the physical birth of Jesus only here and in Gal 4:4: “. . . God sent his son, born from a woman, born under the Law . . .” While the two statements are not contradictory, in Rom Paul situates Jesus firmly within the royal history of Israel, reminding his audience that the appellation Χριστός may be applied rightly to Jesus because of his royal lineage. The Gal reference, on the other hand, references Jesus’ Jewishness as one under the Law, in a letter in which Paul wishes to problematize the Law for the audience! Both, then, remind the audience that Jesus is Jewish, but the reference in Rom bespeaks a rich inheritance, one descended from the last king of the united Israel. Compared with the House of David, the Julians in Rome and Herodians in Palestine are upstart *nouveau riches* of the first century.

The explicit reference to the audience as “among the ἔθνη” occurs in vv. 5-6. Jewett credits F. Godet with a suggested reconstruction of a syllogism that has been very influential in the interpretation of this verse.³⁴⁴ Godet argued that these verses represent

³⁴³ This, as we have seen, and will see later in this chapter, could be one way of understanding Paul’s letter to the Galatians. As cited above, Mason argues that the Paul’s *euangelion* is anathema to the Roman audience, who are Jewish Jesus’ followers.

³⁴⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 111.

the first and middle premise in the following (simplified) syllogism in which the conclusion is left silent but implied:

Paul is called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles (from vv. 1, 5).

But you are gentiles called by Jesus Christ. (v. 6)

Therefore you are part of the flock of which Paul is the shepherd and, therefore, leader.³⁴⁵

Jewett accepts the direction in which Godet's argument flows, translating the critical phrase "among whom you also are called of God."³⁴⁶ Following the same exegetical stance, Stowers translates the phrase more explicitly: "all the gentiles, including you yourselves."³⁴⁷ Coming at the conclusion of a paragraph introducing Paul and his gospel in a manner with so many Jewish tones and overtones, the reference here to the audience as ἔθνη, might seem jarring unless Paul understood the audience to be composed of non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers. Then he uses the term not to identify their religious history but their ethnogeographic identity: they are non-Judeans.

Both very early in the letter (1:1-6) and very late (15:8-12), then, Paul shows that he constructs the audience to be non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers over whom he claims some degree of authority (and with whom he wishes to exercise leadership). Here let me

³⁴⁵ Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (trans. A. Cusin; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1880-1881), 1.137-38. Others using the same basic syllogism: Das, *Solving*, 55. Weima, "Preaching the Gospel", 343. Weima cites A. B. du Toit as referring to the rhetorical device as a form of an "*enthymeme*—a syllogism with one premise [or assumption] omitted." Weima, "Preaching the Gospel," 343, n. 16. In this case, the conclusion rather than an assumption is omitted.

³⁴⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 92, 111.

³⁴⁷ Stowers, *Rereading*, 21.

reiterate an important principle: it is the audience that Paul constructs, the implied audience of Rom and not the empirical audience, that concerns me. While Paul's implied audience is composed of non-Judeans, he argues here as he does nowhere else that his own gospel and mission are aligned with the Hebrew Scriptures. In addition, he cites a very early confession that probably first developed in Judea. Hence, his audience is composed of Jesus followers who are concerned that the gospel be rooted in Judaism.

This confluence of religious and ethnic identities – non-Judean, Jewish, Jesus followers – presents a question of sequencing. Is there a plausible way to describe the audience's change in religious convictions when they became Jesus followers?

The Audience May Have Experienced Secondary Socialization

The movement from one religious system to another is often referred to as “conversion,” or, in the terminology of Berger and Luckman, “alternation.” In the previous chapter, I discussed how Berger and Luckman helpfully distinguish conversion, or “alternation,” from “secondary socialization.”

Alternation requires processes of re-socialization. These processes resemble primary socialization, because they have radically to reassign reality accents and, consequently, must replicate to a considerable degree the strongly affective identification with the socializing personnel that was characteristic of childhood.³⁴⁸

Alternation requires a complete remaking of the social identity of the individual. In alternation, “[t]he plausibility world must become the individual's world, displacing all

³⁴⁸ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 157.

other worlds, especially the world the individual ‘inhabited’ before his alternation.”³⁴⁹

The stories related in chapter 2 of the conversions to the religion of Israel by Izates and Asenath represent such a total change.

Paul uses the language of alternation when speaking to the Thessalonians (“ . . . and how *you turned to God from idols* to serve the living and true God and to await his son from heaven” [1 Thes. 1:9-10]), to the Galatians:

. . . God sent the spirit of his son into your hearts . . . So you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God. *But then* when you did not know God you were enslaved to those things not God by nature. *But now* knowing God – rather being known by God, how do you turn again to the weak and impoverished elements? Do you wish to be enslaved again [to these elements]? (Gal 4:6-9),

and to the Corinthians:

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And *this is what some of you used to be*. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11; NAB).

This language of “turning from” and “turning to” is descriptive of conversion experiences, of a change in life.

Paul uses the same kind of language in Rom 6:17-22:

¹⁷Thanks be to God that *you used to be slaves of sin*, but you are obedient through and through to the teaching imprinted on you [ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς]; ¹⁸freed from sin you are enslaved to righteousness. ¹⁹I speak in a human manner because of the weakness of your humanity. For as you established the members of your body as slaves to uncleanness and abject lawlessness [τῇ ἀκαρθαροσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν], so now establish the members of your body as slaves to righteousness

³⁴⁹ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 158.

for holiness.²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free in respect of righteousness.²¹ What fruit did you have then? Now you are ashamed of those things, for their consequence is death.²² But now, freed from sin, slaves to God, you have your reward: holiness, [and its] consequence, eternal life.

In Rom 6, Paul addresses those who have experienced alternation, based on his use of classic “then-now” language: in the past you were slaves of sin, but now you are slaves to righteousness and holiness. While some might conclude that non-Judean non-Jews adopted a “Pauline law-free” gospel, this text is not necessarily definitive. It may be that they converted first to Judaism and then, as Jews, acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, or, as another possibility, that they converted directly from a traditional religion to a sect within Judaism that acknowledges Jesus as Messiah. In either case, they would be non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers.

In fact, the arguments of Rom would also be accessible and persuasive to “cradle Jews,” *Judean* Jewish Jesus followers. As the Apostle “entrusted with the gospel to the non-Judean non-Jews” (Gal 2:7), Paul may choose in Rom to ignore this latter group (except in his greetings in ch. 16). For the Judean Jewish Jesus followers or non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers who progressed through Judaism to later acknowledge Jesus as Messiah, a subsequent movement *within Judaism* to adopt the practices of the sect of Jesus followers could be described as secondary socialization. Berger and Luckman described the process of secondary socialization, in which

“... the present is interpreted so as to stand in a continuous relationship with the past, with the tendency to minimize such transformations as have actually taken place. Put differently, the reality-base for re-socialization [alternation] is the present, for secondary socialization the past.”³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Berger and Luckman, *Social Construction of Reality*, 163.

As shown earlier, in Rom's opening six verses, Paul reaches back to show the continuity of his gospel with the past, with the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures, and the links between Jesus the Anointed One and David the great king of Israel anointed by Samuel. The arguments that follow in this chapter reinforce this concept of continuity between Judaism and Paul's gospel.

Language to Establish a Common Identity

Paul writes to Rome, a city he has never visited, to a community of Jesus followers whom he has never met, and asks them for assistance in his mission. We have evidence that there are those who question Paul's gospel and express opposition to this request (e.g., Rom 3:8). In order to persuade his audience to act on his behalf, Paul, a Jewish Jesus follower, must use language in the letter to establish a bond, a common identity with them. Here I explore three ways that Paul does this: in his use of personal pronouns, his use of the insider term Ἰσραήλ, and his use of Jewish stereotypes of non-Jews. The common identity that is stressed is that of Jewishness, which suggests that Paul understood the audience to be composed of Jewish Jesus followers.

Paul's Use of "We," "You," and "I"

Paul's lack of previous contact with the Roman community contrasts with the situation when Paul wrote his other letters, as these were clearly meant for communities Paul had formed. Given this difference in familiarity with the audience, Paul might be expected to refer to these other communities in more intimate, familiar language than in his writing to Rome. I argue that this is not the case, that to the contrary Paul actually

uses language in Rom that assumes and promotes the understanding that Paul and the audience share a common identity.

To establish this point, I analyzed Paul's relative use of first person plural (we, us, and our) and second person pronouns (you and your, both singular and plural forms in Greek) in each of the letters. My assumption has been that the writer who uses the more intimate first person plural pronouns rather than second person pronouns is establishing a commonality of values and beliefs with the audience. I argue that a sentence like "... since *we* have been justified by faithfulness *we* have peace with God through *our* Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1) does more to connote a sense of common identity than a sentence such as "I should like *you* to be free of anxieties" (1 Cor. 7:32). In the former, Paul and the Romans share peace with God, while, in the latter, Paul in a sense stands in judgment over the Corinthians. It is not as intimate a relationship as expressed in Rom.

Appendix A describes the methodology employed in this and the related study reported below. The first objective was to count all first person personal plural pronouns ("we," "us," etc.) and pronominal adjectives ("our") whether expressed or implied (as the subject of a verb) in the seven undisputed Pauline letters and the similar statistics for Paul's use of the second person pronouns, singular and plural. In making this tabulation, the number of "we's" has been adjusted for Paul's use of an "editorial we" in such statements as Romans 1:5: "Through whom we received grace and apostleship" ³⁵¹ These are reclassified as first person singular pronouns, "I."

³⁵¹ D. W. B. Robinson studied Paul's use of "we" language in Rom 1-8 and concluded that "although he frequently engages in direct address to his readers ('you'), only rarely does he identify himself with them on the ground of a common position. When Paul says 'I,' he naturally is referring to himself, either

I have calculated that in Rom Paul uses first person plural forms (“we,” “us,” or “our”) 125 times and the second person forms (“you,” “your”) 241 times. In the other six letters combined, Paul uses the first person plural forms 212 times and the second person forms 815 times. Less significant than the absolute number of uses of each pronoun (because of differing lengths and because in all letters, Paul uses “you” much more often than he uses “we”) is the proportion of the two. As a consequence, I have calculated the *relative* use of first person plural and all second person pronouns. The relation is expressed as the ratio of “you” to “we,” the number of times that a second person pronoun is used divided by the number of first person plural pronouns in each letter. The *lower* the ratio the more communitarian Paul’s rhetoric, the closer Paul appears to want to be to the audience. The *higher* the ratio, therefore, the less communitarian, the greater the distance between Paul and the audience. The results are striking and are tabulated below.

personally, or, when he adopts the diatribe style, as a representative figure for the purposes of his argument. But he also can employ ‘we’ in the same way to refer to himself.” (D. W. Robinson, “The Priesthood of Paul in the Gospel of Hope,” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology* [ed. R. Banks; Grand Rapids Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975], 231-45, here 236.) Robinson’s work is flawed in two ways. To start, Robinson *assumes* that Paul and the audience are different ethnically, Paul is a Jew and the Romans non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. From that assumption, Robinson then concludes that the when Paul says “we” it must be an editorial “we.” In contrast, my study uses the data to arrive at a conclusion, not to support a conclusion already reached. Robinson’s second error was in not using any comparative data. As I quickly concluded from my own analysis, Paul’s use of “we” language in Romans is truly remarkable. A *change* in audience from the non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus’ following communities he formed in the East seems a reasonable hypothesis to analyze.

Table 3
Ratio of “You/Your” to “We/Us/Our”

Romans	1.93
Other Six Letters	
1 Corinthians	3.49
2 Corinthians	3.17
Galatians	3.40
Philippians	9.50
1 Thessalonians	4.25
Philemon	NM*
Other Six Letters	3.84

*Paul uses no 1st person plural pronouns in Philemon

In Romans, Paul uses “you” 241 times, slightly less than twice as often as he uses “we,” 125 times. The 1.93 ratio is the ratio of the former to the latter. In comparison, Paul uses “you” more than three times more often than “we” in 1 Corinthians (3.49 times), and almost 4 times more often in all the other six letters, 3.84 times. In other words, on average, Paul uses “you” essentially twice as often in relation to “we” in the other six letters as he does in Rom. Paul’s repeated use of the first person plural pronoun in Rom emphasizes the commonalities of Paul and the Roman audience, rather than the differences between them.

A second analysis confirmed this conclusion. In this analysis, Paul’s use of “I/me/my” was compared with his use of “we/us/our.” that is, the first person singular pronoun compared with the first person plural pronoun. Since Paul uses the singular pronouns much more often in his letters, the relationship is expressed again as a ratio, that of “I” to “we.” As in the first analysis, the *lower* the ratio, the more Paul is working on a common identity with his audience. The results are tabulated below.

Table 4
Ratio of “I/Me/My” to “We/Us/Our”

Romans	1.41
Other Six Letters	
1 Corinthians	3.48
2 Corinthians	4.93
Galatians	3.47
Philippians	15.63
1 Thessalonians	2.96
Philemon	NM*
Other Six Letters	4.49

*Paul uses no 1st person plural pronouns in Philemon

In Romans, Paul refers to himself individually, using the first person singular pronoun, 177 times, 1.41 times as often as the 125 times he refers to himself collectively with the audience, using the first person plural pronoun. In 1 Corinthians, on the other hand, Paul refers to himself 290 times, or 3.48 times more frequently than the 80 times he refers to himself and the audience. The ratio of 1.41 in Romans is less than one-third the relative frequency for the total of the other six undisputed letters, and less than half the next smallest ratio. In other words, Paul is two to three times more likely to use “we” rather than “I” in Romans than in the other letters.³⁵² The effect is, once again, to align Paul more closely with the audience of Romans than if he had written in the same style as

³⁵² In making this comparison, I have included in the 177 “I” references in Romans, the 27 uses of the first person singular pronoun in Romans 7:7-25, Paul’s discussion of the “troubled conscience.” By including the 27 “I’s” in the total, I am implicitly accepting the characterization of the speaker as Paul himself. There are, however, several alternate theories of the identity of the speaker. Removing the 27 references clearly strengthens my point that there is a significant difference in the rhetoric of Romans and the other letters based on the use of first person singular and plural pronouns. Omitting these 27 uses lowers the “I/we” ratio from 1.41 to 1.19.

in his other letters. When he writes in a communitarian way, the implication is that Paul the Jew is expressing his solidarity with the Roman Jews.

Paul's Use of Ἰσραήλ

In all the undisputed letters, Paul uses the term Ἰσραήλ/Ἰσραηλῖτης 19 times, 13 times in Rom, all in chapters 9-11. While in the first eight chapters of Romans Paul uses the term Ἰουδαῖος exclusively (and will do so three more times), in chapters 9-11 Paul uses the term Ἰσραήλ. I note this because at the time of Rom, Ἰσραήλ appears to be an “ingroup” term, used by Hellenistic Jews – and only by Jews – in religious and/or liturgical contexts.³⁵³ Paul's usage outside Rom carries this connotation. He uses the term twice to refer to the transmittal of the Law from God to Moses (2 Cor 3:7, 13), twice to Paul's own participation in the religion of Israel (2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5), and once to those eating the meat from the Jerusalem temple sacrifices as participating in the sacrifice (1 Cor 10:18). These five uses confirm Paul's usual connotation as referring to the religion of Israel. The connotation of the sixth, Gal 6:16 (“As for those who will follow this rule -- peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” [NRSV]), is

³⁵³ K. G. Kuhn, “Ἰσραήλ, Ἰσραηλῖτης, κτλ.” *TDNT* 3.356-91. A *TLG* search shows pre-second century C.E. use only in the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the New Testament. In the Gospel of John, the term Ἰσραηλῖτης (and derivatives) appears five times, always positively (e.g., John 1:47, 49: “Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him and said of him, ‘Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him.’” Nathaniel reciprocates the sentiment two verses later.). In contrast, the Fourth Gospel uses the term Ἰουδαῖος (and derivatives) approximately 60 times. Two-thirds of the time the term refers, neutrally, to the religion or nationality of the people with whom Jesus interacts. The bulk of the remainder are often condemnatory references to the politico-religious leaders (e.g., John 7:1: “After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him.” [NRSV]).

contested. If it does not fit the use of the term in Rom, it is hardly surprising given the number of times we will see how in Rom Paul uses terms differently than in Gal.³⁵⁴

The first and last uses of Ἰσραὴλ in Rom, 9:4-5 and 11:26, especially carry a religious connotation. The initial citation describes the status markers of Israelites: “theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, and the law and the worship and the promises, from whom are the patriarchs and the Christ . . .” Verse 11:26 provides the capstone for the benefits when Paul affirms “and thus all Israel will be saved.” Because it is “ingroup” language, Paul’s use of Ἰσραὴλ roughly half way through the letter signals his confidence that he has established himself as an insider with the audience at Rome and has “permission” to use this kind of language.

Use of the language also signals that the rhetoric has become more formal, concerned with the ultimate realities of being Jewish. Later in this section, at 11:1, Paul identifies himself as an Israelite. By that point in Paul’s explication, however, he will have narrowed the meaning of the term, for “not all who are from Israel [i.e., born Judean] are Israel.” Nevertheless, the self-representation represents a strong identification with the ethos of the Jews.

³⁵⁴ Bassler emphasizes the ambiguity of Galatians 6:15-16. Israel could be a reference to (1) all Jesus followers but not Jews who do not follow Jesus (so Martyn, *Galatians*, 576); (2) all those faithful, Jesus followers and other faithful Jews; or (3) those ultimately saved including Jews and non-Jews in accordance with God’s promise to Abraham (Gal 3:8). Jouette M. Bassler, *Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts* (Louisville and London: WestminsterJohnKnox, 2007), 77-78. Betz concludes “. . . the meaning of the term ‘Israel of God’ presupposes that at the time of Galatians the borderline between Christianity and Judaism was not yet clearly drawn, that a diversity of Christian and Jewish movements and groups tried to come to grips with the issue of Christ, and that the claim expressed in ‘Israel of God’ could be made by different groups at the same time. Thus, Paul extends the blessing beyond the Galatian Paulinists to those Jewish-Christians who approve of his κανὼν (‘rule’) in v 15.” Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 323.

Paul's Use and Transformation of Stereotypes

In this section, I will argue that Paul's language about non-Jews in Romans 1:19-29, using stereotypically Jewish language, demonstrates that Paul assumes a common Jewish identity with the Roman audience. Stereotypes are integral to the production and maintenance of a group's social identity as they clarify intergroup boundaries and normative behaviors.³⁵⁵ When an author shares a stereotype with an audience, the implication is that the author and audience share a common social identity.

The stereotypical idolatrous, fornicating non-Jew of Jewish lore, however, also might be thought to represent an accurate stereotype of the communities Paul has formed, since they are composed of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. This identification of the stereotype with Paul's communities could pose a threat to Paul's securing assistance from within the community in Rome since the consequence of raising a stereotype is to evoke fear or loathing or both in the audience towards the group represented by the stereotype. To counteract the fear and loathing that the stereotype would evoke, Paul entered into a prolonged effort to transform the stereotype so that his community would not be included within it. In this section, I summarize research on stereotypes and then analyze both of Paul's efforts, first his deployment of the stereotype and then his efforts to transform that stereotype.

³⁵⁵ "Stereotypes are generalizations about people based on category membership. They are beliefs that all members of a particular group have the same qualities which circumscribe the group and differentiate it from other groups. A specific group member is assumed to be, or is treated as, essentially identical to other members of the group, and the group as a whole is thus perceived and treated as being homogenous. . . . [T]here is a tendency to attach derogatory stereotypes to outgroups and favourable ones to ingroups." Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 65. See also Hogg, "Intragroup Processes," 66.

Stereotypes are among the most studied phenomena by social psychologists and social identity theorists. For an individual, stereotypes constitute invaluable aids to dealing with the myriad of stimuli in the world.

Stereotypes are certain generalizations reached by individuals. They derive in large measure from, or are an instance of, the general cognitive process of categorizing. The main function of this process is to simplify or systematize, for purposes of the cognitive and behavioural adaptation, the abundance and complexity of the information received from its environment by the human organism³⁵⁶

When a large number of people share the same stereotype, these stereotypes become part of the social identity of the group. Here,

. . . “social context” refers to the fact that stereotypes held in common by large numbers of people are derived from, and structured by, the relations between large-scale social groups or entities. The functioning and use of stereotypes result from an intimate interaction between this contextual structuring and their role in the adaptation of individuals to their social environment.³⁵⁷

Other studies of social stereotypes have confirmed the main thrust of Tajfel’s work, concluding that “stereotypes . . . need to be understood as tools that are developed by groups both to represent their members’ shared social reality and to achieve particular objectives within it.”³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 145.

³⁵⁷ Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 146.

³⁵⁸ S. Alexander Halsam, et al., “From Personal Pictures in the Head to Collective Tools in the World: How Shared Stereotypes Allow Groups to Represent and Change Social Reality” in *Stereotypes as Explanations* (eds. V. Yzerbyt, et al.; Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 157-85, here 161. Hogg and Abrams emphasize the shared nature of stereotypes: “An important feature of stereotypes is that they are *shared*; that is, large sections of society will agree on what the stereotypes of particular groups are.” Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 65-66.

Paul Presents the Stereotype of the Idolatrous Fornicating Non-Jew

In Rom 1:19-32, Paul deploys the Jewish stereotype of the idolatrous, sexually uncontrolled non-Jew. Paul claims that God's wrath will be directed against idolaters who have had the opportunity to know the true God through works of nature, but have chosen the path of idolatry instead (vv.19-21), with the inevitable consequences of foolishness and sexual impropriety (vv. 22-31). This rhetorical flow from idolatry to foolishness and sexual deviance is exactly that noted earlier in Eisenbaum's demonstration of a typical Jewish take on foreigners. We have seen texts from the Hebrew Bible that tie idolatry to untamed passions. Chronologically closer to Paul are two great Jewish Alexandrian writers of this time, Philo and the author of *Wisdom of Solomon*, who followed very similar patterns of logic in their invectives against idolaters.³⁵⁹ Roman Jews could point to the post-Augustan emperors as examples of idolatrous, fornicating non-Jews. One of their most unhappy memories would be of Gaius whose appetites were well known and whose plan to erect a statue to himself as a god in the Jerusalem temple put him on a collision course with Palestinian Jews. For all of these reasons, the stereotype of non- Jews would have been familiar to Roman Jews.

When Paul uses this negative stereotype of the non-Jew, he accomplishes two tasks. First of all, he cites as his own a stereotype used within the ingroup of Jews, implicitly asserting his membership in their group. His second accomplishment is to reinforce a positive social identity of Jews, accentuating the superiority of the Jews in

³⁵⁹ Wis 13-15 has several striking parallels to Romans. Philo uses many of the same arguments as in Rom 1 against worship of the creature rather than creator in *Decal.* XI-XVI; Philo claims that adultery will destroy the "tone of the soul" (*Decal.* XXIII).

comparison with the “not-Jews.” Hogg and Abrams conclude “self-categorization imbues the self with all the attributes of the group, and so it is important that such attributes are ones which reflect well on self.”³⁶⁰ In fact, the stereotype accentuates non-Jewish inability to attain a value Jews *shared* with the majority culture – mastery of passions, closely aligned with the virtue of temperance.³⁶¹ The logic for Jewish use of the stereotype would be that while non-Jews acknowledge the value of self-mastery, their practice of idolatry destroys their ability to achieve the self-mastery they seek. Thus, the stereotype serves to enhance the ingroup (Jews) sense of self against the outgroup (non-Jews). At this point, therefore, Paul is positioning himself as a Jewish insider who shares important values and reinforces a positive self-identity with other Jews.³⁶²

While this use of a stereotype is certainly consistent with a Jewish audience, is its use also consistent with a *non-Judean* Jewish audience? Again, we can turn to Berger and Luckman’s discussion of conversion. They argued that conversion represented a change in symbolic universe accompanied by a break with the past (“that was then . . . this is

³⁶⁰ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 74.

³⁶¹ For a summary of the major ethical philosophers, “in their own words,” see Cicero *De Finibus*. Caesar Augustus, an idolater who brought new gods to Rome and operated out of a political calculus, worked to restore the presumptive ethical standards of the early Republic on his accession to the principate. Neither he nor his successors saw any reason to disparage the traditional gods in order to establish – or re-establish – a proper ethical standard. Stowers and Tobin both describe the importance of self-mastery in the Greco-Roman culture. Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, 42-81. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 228-29.

³⁶² The development and application of this stereotype may be interpreted as an effort by Judean Jews to “reinterptet the existing inferior characteristics of the group, so that they do not appear as inferior but acquire a positively valued distinctiveness from the superior group” as described in Henri Tajfel, “The Achievement of Group Differentiation,” in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. H. Tajfel; London: New Academic Press, 1978), 77-98, quotation at 94. Cicero, for example, classed the Judean Jews as inferior precisely because the God of Israel had been defeated by the Romans. The stereotype of the idolatrous fornicating non-Judean non-Jew turns Cicero’s perception of the Religion of Israel on its head: *because* of our religious practices we are masters of our passions.

now”). In the case of a Roman audience composed of non-Judean Jews, denunciation of the stereotype of non-Judean non-Jews as idolatrous fornicators reinforces their conversion as they could say “there but for the grace of God go I.” Paul reminds them that by accepting the authority of the Law of Moses they have moved from the community of the undisciplined to the community of controlled individuals.

Paul faced a downside from the use of this stereotype, in addition to its benefits, for when he evoked the stereotype of an idolatrous, dissolute fornicator, he might be describing his own religious communities. Earlier, he professed that his ministry was to announce a gospel that brought salvation to both Jews and non-Jews (λουδαίῳ τε πρωτον καὶ Ἑλληνι) (1:16). Writing to a Jewish audience, Paul could anticipate that this first reference to non-Jews would evoke this very stereotype, generating prejudice against and fear of non-Judean, non-Jews. Indeed, Paul, the apostle to the uncircumcised, could expect opponents to use this stereotype to destroy his credibility with his audience.

Walter G. Stephan and Cookie White Stephan studied the responses of groups to several types of “threats,” including threats arising from negative stereotypes. The first reaction to negative stereotypes is to raise fears in the members of the ingroup. The Stephans observe:

Almost all outgroup stereotypes embody threats to the ingroup because one of the functions of stereotypes is to serve as a basis for expectations concerning the behavior of members of the stereotyped group. . . . To the extent that expectations are negative, conflictual or unpleasant interactions are to be anticipated. The essence of threat is the fear of the negative consequences, and that is exactly what negative stereotypes create.³⁶³

³⁶³ Walter G. Stephan and Cookie White Stephan, “An Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice,” in *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination* (ed. S. Oskamp; Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000), 23-46; quotation

For the Jews of Rome, non-Jews, particularly non-Judean non-Jews, could present a sufficiently negative stereotype to induce anxiety among them.

In order to achieve his objectives, however, Paul must raise, address, and defuse this stereotype. Research has confirmed that it is virtually impossible for a member of an outgroup to modify a stereotype; ingroup members will only accept modifications of stereotypes when provided by ingroup members.³⁶⁴ So Paul has portrayed for the audience in Rome the Jewish stereotype of the non-Jew, choosing to do so despite the dangers of provoking adverse reactions against his own missionary activities, in order to establish his own credentials as an ingroup member and to begin a process to modify the stereotype, at least as far as it applies to his own communities.

S. Alexander Halsam and his coauthors address the issue of conflicts over stereotypes, using the example of two American spectators at the Olympics who discover that they do not necessarily agree that all Americans must always root against all Russian Olympians. The discussion is worth reciting in full.

A particular issue here concerns the management of disagreement. If two Americans at the Olympic Games have different views about Russians and about the way that they should be treated (e.g., disagreeing about whether they should be supported, ignored, rebuked or vilified) what do they do? Turner . . . outlines three possible reactions. Firstly, through negotiation, they can attribute their disagreement to relevant differences ‘out there’ in the stimulus domain. Perhaps one American was thinking about Russian gymnasts and the other about Russian boxers, and, having established this fact they can agree that there are important

26. The Stephans identified three other threats: realistic threats (threats such as warfare or economic attacks on the material well-being and even existence of the group), symbolic threats involving “perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs and attitudes . . . threats to the worldview of the group” and threats arising from anxiety about intergroup relations with the other group. Stephan and Stephan, “Integrated Threat Theory,” 25-27.

³⁶⁴ Halsam, et al., “Stereotypes: How Groups Represent and Change Social Reality,” 164.

differences between these two groups that warrant a different response. Secondly, through a similar process, the Americans can explain their disagreement in terms of relevant category-based differences between themselves. Perhaps the two will discover that really they should not be relating to each other in terms of a shared national self-categorization because one is a Democratic ‘dove’ and the other a Republican ‘hawk’ and it is these divergent political identities that are most relevant in this setting. Finally, if neither of these alternatives is plausible or fitting, they can engage in a process of mutual influence so that through the exchange of information, discussion, argument and persuasion they work to arrive at a common understanding and a shared stereotypic response – a process . . . refer[red] to as group consensualization.³⁶⁵

Just as the two Americans disagree about Russian Olympians, Paul and the Roman audience disagree on the perception of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. Two of the three strategies for resolving in-group differences are available to Paul: attribution of the disagreement to relevant differences in the stereotype and consensualization leading to a shared stereotypic response. Paul cannot, however, explain the difference as a matter of category-based differences between himself and the audience as long as his overarching goal is to establish a common self-identity with the Roman audience.

To see how Paul might address this issue, consider how Paul tackled a similar conflict in another situation. When writing to Philemon on behalf of his escaped slave Onesimus, Paul’s goal was to convince Philemon that the stereotypical view of slaves no longer applied to Onesimus. At the opening, Paul asserts his leadership position within Philemon’s house church (Phlm 1) and Philemon’s own debt to Paul (vv. 8 and 19).³⁶⁶ To

³⁶⁵ Halsam, et al., “Stereotypes: How Groups Represent and Change Social Reality,” 164-65.

³⁶⁶ Contrasting Philemon and Romans, one can see that in terms of Hogg’s marks of leadership, Paul has many more resources with regards to Philemon than to the Romans. Paul’s leadership is one of influence, not coercion (Phlm 14 and Hogg’s point 1). Hogg’s point 3 that leadership is a transaction between leader

persuade Philemon to re-categorize Onesimus, from slave to brother (verses 15-16), Paul uses the first strategy outlined above, attributing their difference to Philemon's (mis-) categorization of him as a slave while Paul categorizes him as a "brother" following his baptism (v. 10). Paul rests his case on the implicit mutual agreement that when Philemon realizes that Onesimus has been baptized then Philemon also will recategorize Onesimus from "slave" to "brother."

Paul's situation in Rome is more difficult than in the case of Philemon and Onesimus. While Paul was known to Philemon and had already provided Philemon with benefits, for his disagreement with the Roman opposition, all he has is this one letter to do many jobs. Halsam presumes that the two Americans are in each other's presence and can engage in a process of negotiation and mutual influencing. Paul's absence precludes a personal interchange so Paul uses an imaginary interlocutor to represent the audience. The interlocutor's role is to express the questions and attitudes of the audience, as Paul imagines them to be. With that move, Paul turns the letter from a monologue to a dialogue. This permits him to begin the process(es) of both/either negotiation and/or consensualization, to move Paul's communities from the category of pagans to the category of sisters and brother in Christ.

Paul's Dialogue with a Curious, but Disruptive, Non-Judean Jew

Paul introduces an interlocutor in ch. 2, immediately after providing a summary critique of the stereotypical Gentile (1:19-32). At 2:1-16, Paul denounces this "judge"

and the group is weighted heavily in Paul's favor since Philemon owes him his "very self" (Philm. 19), a debt Paul is now calling due.

and reflects on the relation of Jews and Gentiles to the law. Then Paul addresses the interlocutor, a self-styled Jew (2:17), who teaches others about the law but does not himself follow the precepts of the law (vv. 18-24). After denouncing him, Paul gives a five verse summary of the relationship between circumcision and the law (vv. 25-29).

In the secondary literature on Romans, this use of an interlocutor to create a rhetorical dialogue partner is referred to as a diatribe. Based on its use in other classical texts, scholars concluded that the diatribe was a classroom technique developed in the philosophical schools with its origins in the Socratic-Platonic dialogues.³⁶⁷ As a style of teaching, it included many elements, including various poetic and rhetorical figures, address to imaginary persons, use of a fictitious opponent, presentation of objections, short dialogues, and use of rhetorical questions.³⁶⁸

In Romans, Paul addresses what he believes to be the audience's negative stereotypes, but lacks the social capital from the kind of direct, personal exchanges

³⁶⁷ Stowers' monograph *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* devoted considerable space to the history of the scholarship on the term. He concludes that "[o]ur study has suggested very strongly that the dialogical element in the diatribe is basically an attempt to adapt this method to a dogmatic type of philosophy in the school situation. . . .

"With regard to the meaning of the term διατριβή, our sources . . . use διατριβή as a term for the school as we would speak of 'going to school'. They also use the term to designate various forms of educational activity in the school (lecture, discussions), and at least Plutarch seems to distinguish this from private talks with the philosopher. Although not a technical term for a genre in antiquity, diatribe, then, is an appropriate and useful term for these works that either had their origin in the philosophical school or imitate the style of the school discourse." Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (vol. 57; Chico Cal: Scholars Press, 1981), 77.

³⁶⁸ Stowers credits Henricus Weber (*De Senecae philophi dicendi genere Bioneo* [Marburg: F. Soemmering, 1895]) with cataloguing the elements of the diatribe. Stowers, *Diatribe*, 9.

It is notable that this style, in particular the use of an interlocutor, is not *explicitly* employed in Paul's other letters. In them, Paul may be addressing a specific issue raised by the community, as in his letters to Corinth, and probably Philippi. Galatians and Philemon were written to address a new issue for a Pauline community that Paul himself raised. In a real sense, then, these letters too are dialogic: the issues and the arguments are just well known in the community addressed.

underlying his other letters. In part to compensate, Paul uses the diatribe. Using an imaginary interlocutor allows Paul to give voice to and then respond to the community's expected fears and concerns. In this intermediary role, the imaginary interlocutor represents the community and in Paul's engagement with the interlocutor, he engages the community. Perhaps even more importantly, as Paul rebuts and reproves the interlocutor, so, at one step removed, he rebuts and reproves the audience. Fitzmyer concludes “. . . such a style is particularly apt in a letter to a church that Paul has not founded or even visited.”³⁶⁹

The scope of the use of these figures bears comment. Paul first addresses an interlocutor at 2:1: “ὧς ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων” (“you [singular] mortal, every one of you, who judge,”) and later addresses the interlocutor directly in four more places: 2:17-24; 9:19-21; 11:17-24 and 14:4.³⁷⁰ Stowers includes these verses because of Paul's use in them of the second person singular pronoun in direct address. In addition, in chapters 3-11, the interlocutor poses 23 rhetorical questions, about one every 10 verses. These questions presumably voice the concerns of the audience and are an effective way for Paul to raise and address them.³⁷¹ Using these questions, Paul constructs a Socratic

³⁶⁹ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 91.

³⁷⁰ Stowers, *Diatribes*, 95-100. Note that Stowers does not include what are interpreted to be direct addresses to the audience, as in 6:3, ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε . . . (“Do you not know . . .”) 7:1, ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ λαλῶ (“For you (plural) are not ignorant, brothers, for I am speaking to those knowing . . .”) and 11:13, Ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (“I am speaking to you (plural) non-Judeans.”). These are marked by the use of second person plural rather than single pronouns. I interpret the question in 6:1, (“What shall we say? shall we remain in sin in order that grace may abound?”) to come from the interlocutor though Paul's subsequent address is to the audience.

³⁷¹ Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography* (ConBNT; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003), 146.

dialogue, with the interlocutor first voicing a concern of the audience (as at 3:1: “What advantage is there to being a Jew?”) followed by Paul using questions to lead the interlocutor to accept Paul’s position (as at 3:5 “But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous when he expresses his anger?”). As Runar Thorsteinsson comments, “It is Paul’s very employment of the dialogical style which characterizes and steers the macrostructure of Romans 2-11.”³⁷²

The Identity of the Interlocutor in Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides the first address to the interlocutor and some important information on his religious identity. The unraveling of this identity, however, is a complex process and requires that we understand the relationship between 1:19-32 and ch. 2 and how Paul is using the interlocutor in this instance.

I read 2:1 as a deliberate continuation from 1:32, an address to the interlocutor following on from Paul’s deployment of the stereotype of the non-Jew. The clearest mark of this is Paul’s use of $\delta\iota\omicron$ at the opening of the verse. Here $\delta\iota\omicron$ is a strong conjunctive: from all that has gone before *therefore* the following holds.³⁷³ In the process, Paul switches from talking about “they” (third person plural) in 1:32 to “you” (second person singular) in 2:1. Paul is moving from talking about “people out there who do bad things” to a direct address with one individual immediately, if imaginatively, present, an important characteristic of a diatribe.³⁷⁴ Stowers points out that the earliest chapter

³⁷² Thorsteinsson, *Paul’s Interlocutor*, 145.

³⁷³ Examples: Plato, *Republic* 358d and *Cratylus* 412a; Thucydides, *Historiae* 6.84.2. See TLG.

³⁷⁴ Stowers, *Diatribes*, 9. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 298.

divisions of Romans showed no break between these verses, implying that the earliest readers saw the argument flowing directly across the modern chapter divisions.³⁷⁵

While the two chapters are intimately linked, Paul's change from "they" to "you" is disconcerting in its swiftness. Having established his credentials as a good Jew in the introductory verses and with the stereotype of the non-Jew in 1:19-32, Paul abruptly addresses an interlocutor with a question and implied accusation, which I summarize: "Who are you to judge someone else when you do the same thing?" The individual addressed has shared with Paul the negative stereotype of non-Jews as idolatrous fornicators and now Paul upbraids him for hypocritical behavior. It is as if Paul and the interlocutor were placidly sharing an apocalyptic vision of the dismal behavior of non-Jews, congratulating each other on their good fortune for being Jewish, when Paul turns on the Jew to chastise him for judging the non-Jews! Is not that exactly what Paul was asking the interlocutor to do?

If we take 2:1 as the start of a diatribe, then we would expect that Paul's purpose is pedagogical, to educate the *audience* through reproof of the interlocutor. As Stowers notes ". . . censure is not an aspect of real inquiry, but an attempt to expose specific errors in thought and behavior so that the student can be led to another doctrine of life."³⁷⁶ That is, Paul is using the diatribe to reprove his audience for judging non-Jews, even the stereotypical non-Jews, when the judges are also sinful. The use of an imaginary interlocutor provides a distancing between this hypocrisy and the audience. After all,

³⁷⁵ Stowers, *Rereading*, 12-13.

³⁷⁶ Stowers, *Diatribes*, 77.

castigating a judgmental hypocrite is hardly ever a high risk rhetorical strategy: Paul stands on the side of all those in the audience who themselves decry hypocrisy, and Paul could assume that to constitute a very high percentage of the listeners. Paul also stands solidly within the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures. In them, time after time speaker – an individual (as in the case of Job), a spokesperson for the people, or God (as in, for example, Ezekiel 33:20; 35:11) – will condemn hypocrisy of judges and rulers who judge unjustly. Amos and Isaiah, among others, decried hypocrisy in judgments: “Woe to those who turn justice into wormwood and cast righteousness to the ground” (Amos 5:7 NAB); “Depriving the needy of judgment, robbing my people’s poor of justice, making widows their plunder, and orphans their prey!” (Isa 10:2 NAB). In Romans, Paul is speaking to “those who know the Law” (7:1), “recognize ‘God’s requirement,’” and therefore are without excuse for hypocritical actions (2:1-3).³⁷⁷ Unlike a direct reproof of the whole audience (represented by a second person plural address as in “All of you are hypocrites”) a benefit of using an interlocutor is that it allows the audience to “pick and choose” what pertains to them individually – “surely I’m not a hypocrite?” – and what applies to others – “but I’m not so sure about you.”

If the person addressed is to represent the audience, is there any way to identify his religious identity? Based on the shared stereotype, the simplest and most direct response is that the individual is a Jew.³⁷⁸ As argued above, this early in the letter Paul

³⁷⁷ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 299.

³⁷⁸ In identifying the interlocutor as a Jew, I am joined by Byrne, *Romans*, 79;. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.137-38;. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.78;. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 297-98;.and Käsemann, *Romans*, 53-54.

would be foolish to deploy a negative stereotype of non-Jews in a letter to non-Jews. Jewsh, therefore, is part of the identity of the individual. At this point in the letter, however, it is not possible to say whether the individual is a Judean or not, or a Jesus follower or not.

Stowers argues to the contrary that the person addressed in 2:1 must be the same as the person indicted immediately above, namely the stereotypical non-Jew whom “God handed over to a debased mind.”³⁷⁹ By this categorization, I take it that Stowers would describe the interlocutor as non-Judean, non-Jewish. He addresses this point in connection with his argument countering the interpretation dating from Augustine that the individual cited in 2:1 must be the “hypocritical Jew” because the ancient Jew was supposedly known to be hypocritical. Stowers rejects this view on three counts. First, Stowers points out that the Augustinian reading depends, in part, on Augustine’s reading 2:1 as a new topic, and not a continuation of Paul’s argument in ch. 1 concerning the depraved non-Jews. On the contrary, Stowers observes, first, that the two oldest chapter divisions, “the *kephala majora* and a system in *Codex Vaticanus*, . . . [b]oth mark off 1:18-2:12 as a section” and, second, patristic commentators before Augustine debated who was the addressee of the apostrophe (Origen: ministers of the church; Chrysostom civil magistrates or all people; Pelagius: “morally arrogant gentiles”) but wrote assuming that 2:1 was a continuation from 1:32.³⁸⁰ Furthermore, Stowers finds no evidence that any pagan writer ever applied the character of a hypocritical judge to Jews before Augustine

³⁷⁹ Stowers, *Rereading*, 14.

³⁸⁰ Stowers, *Rereading*, 12.

did.³⁸¹ Finally, Stowers cites Seneca (*Vit. bea.* 27.4) and Plutarch (*Curios.* 515D) who, like Paul, used apostrophes to indict the hypocrisy of those who thought themselves superior to consider their own actions.³⁸² Stowers argues that the denunciation of the stereotyped non-Jew as an evil doer carries over to a denunciation of *the same* non-Jew as a hypocrite.³⁸³

As to Stowers' first argument, I have referred to it already, and take as a starting point in the discussion that 2:1 represents a continuation of the discussion in ch. 1. I also accept that indeed there was no stereotype of a hypocritical judging Jew before Christian writers created it. I would point out, however, that this argument does not by itself prove that the interlocutor was *not* a Jew. In fact, condemnation of hypocrisy was not foreign to first century Judaism. The classic Biblical case of condemnation of a hypocritical judge comes in 2 Samuel 12 where Nathan tricks King David into condemning David's arranging the death of Uriah that he might marry Bathsheba. Psalm 50:16-20 makes a similar indictment of one who knows the law but acts contrary to it. Second Maccabees relates both the refusal of Eleazar to play the hypocrite by pretending to eat impure food while actually eating clean food (2 Mac 6:18-30) and the deception of Apollonius, commander of the Mysians, who massacred the Jerusalemites after deceiving them with a

³⁸¹ Stowers, *Rereading*, 13.

³⁸² Stowers, *Rereading*, 14. Seneca rails against those who condemn philosophers, penning the winning phrase "You look at the pimples of others when you yourselves are covered with a mass of sores."

³⁸³ The language of 2:5 seems to echo the Jewish apocalyptic trope that God is withholding divine wrath from the non-Jews but when it is unleashed it will be devastating. Jews, on the other hand, receive regular chastisement so that the final accounting will not be as severe for them (cf. 1 Cor 11:32; Wisd 3). While 2:5 then may be taken as a reference to non-Jews, Paul in Rom 1:18 has stated that the "wrath of God will be revealed against all human ungodliness and injustice," including all Jewish transgressions.

pretense of being peacefully disposed towards them (2 Mac 5:24-26). Sir 32:15 and 33:2 condemn the hypocrite who hates the law. *Pss. Sol.* 4:20-22 calls for birds to peck out the eyes of the hypocrites who destroy the houses of many people without compunction. In secular literature, references to “hypocrisy” often came in the context of politics, local and international (e.g., Aristotle, *Politics* 1314a.40; Polybius *History* 2.49.7), while the wily Odysseus may be considered the ultimate hypocrite. In sum, condemning hypocrisy would have been acceptable to an audience of Roman Jewish Jesus followers.

I do not find Stowers’ third argument, perceived parallels with Seneca and Plutarch particularly persuasive. It is not, in the first place, inevitable that the interlocutor following a series of condemnations be identical to the person condemned. The section from Plutarch occurs near the opening of the essay. Plutarch opens with a recital of changes in the layout of cities when their orientation (to the sun or the mountains) was found unsatisfactory. Then he draws the parallel to the human “states of mind which allow winter and darkness to enter the soul” (*Curios.* 515.C [Hembold, LCL]). Such a malady is curiosity which Plutarch then warns the audience against. The first part of the argument, however, is sufficiently general that the identity of the interlocutor may or may not be a curious person.

In the case of Seneca, the parallel is even less obvious. The section Stowers cites appears within a defense by Socrates of his virtue (*Vit. Bea.* 26.3-28.1). Throughout this defense, Socrates addresses “vos,” the second person plural “you” (e.g. “I shall not consider that you [2nd person plural] are railing at me . . .” [*Vit. Bea.* 26.1 [Basore, LCL]]). At the place Stowers cites, 27.4, there is no change in the persons addressed, but

continues to be a second person plural. In contrast, at Rom 2:1 Paul switches from a third person plural “they” to a second person singular, “you.”

Furthermore, in v. 2 Paul uses the phrase ὁδοῦμεν δὲ ὅτι. Jewett argues that this “gently separates Paul’s audience from the seeming targets of the harangue,” for indeed the audience becomes part of the harangue.³⁸⁴ Jewett points out that the phrase ὁδοῦμεν ὅτι is used by Paul to express, first, a bit of common knowledge shared with the audience of his letters and “conveys Paul’s solidarity with his audience in the churches.”³⁸⁵ Paul, in other words, quickly and clearly separates the audience from the condemnation of the hypocrite.

Finally, as we have seen, 1:19-32 presents a typical Jewish stereotypical linkage of idolatry with uncontrolled sexual excess. It does not seem credible that Paul would expect non-Jews, by definition idolaters (whether non-Judean or Judean non-Jews), would share that stereotype, since many Greco-Roman philosophers promoted a high degree of self-control too. If non-Jews would rebel at the deployment of the stereotype, they would not be judgmental of those so described and could not be classed as hypocrites.

By my reading, then, the apostrophe is addressed to a Jew hypocritically judging the stereotypical non-Jew. Accusing a particular Jew of being a hypocrite does not fix Paul as anti-Jewish, but (as shown above) as prophetic, condemning those who are hypocritical.

³⁸⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 198.

³⁸⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 198.

Identification of the interlocutor as a Jew is affirmed and amplified as Paul continues his dialogue with the interlocutor through the remainder of chapter 2. At 2:17, Paul addresses “you” (σὺ, 2nd person singular) who “call[s] yourself a Jew and rel[ies] on the law and boast in God.” For many modern commentators, this appellation confirms the identity of the interlocutor as a Jew who does not follow Jesus.³⁸⁶ The categorization, however, is too quick. As argued above, the use of an interlocutor is to stand in for the audience, but need not be identical in every respect to the audience. Hence, the more cautious approach is to consider exactly what Paul says: the reference is to one who *calls himself* a Jew. Decades after Paul Epictetus made a similar comment:

Why, then, do you call [λέγεις] yourself a Stoic, why do you deceive the multitude, why do you act the part of a Jew when you are a Greek? Do you not see in what sense men are severally called [λέγεται] Jew, Syrian, or Egyptian? For example, whenever you see a man halting between two faiths, we are in the habit of saying, “He is not a Jew, he is only acting the part.” But when he adopts the attitude of mind of the man who has been baptized and has made his choice, then he both is a Jew in fact and also called one [καλεῖται]. So we also are counterfeit “baptists,” ostensibly Jews, but in reality something else, not in sympathy with our own reason, far from applying the principles which we profess, yet priding ourselves upon them as being men who know them. (*Diss.* 2.9.19-21 [Oldfather, LCL]).³⁸⁷

Citing this passage from Epictetus, Jewett comments that “The topos of claiming cultural identity that one does not sincerely follow is well known in philosophical circles” in

³⁸⁶ See note above. Stowers argues that the interlocutor of 2:1 is a non-Jew, but the interlocutor addressed at 2:17 is a Jewish teacher. Stowers, *Rereading*, 15, 37.

³⁸⁷ Epictetus, *Discourses* (LCL; trans. W. A. Oldfather; Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946).

antiquity.³⁸⁸ The parallel with Epictetus suggests strongly that Paul is addressing a non-Judean Jew.

In his study of epistolary practice, Runar Thorsteinsson concluded that without a definite signal to the contrary, the writer used the same interlocutor throughout the letter.³⁸⁹ That is, the interlocutor of 2:1, the hypocritical judge, is the same interlocutor at 2:17. A non-Judean, Jewish interlocutor constitutes *prima facie* evidence that the audience, on whose behalf the interlocutor acts, should be considered as non-Judean Jewish as well.

Interspersed with the discussion of hypocrisy are Paul's assertions that non-Jews are capable of living in accordance with the Law (2:13-16, 26-29). Unspoken at this point is the accepted belief that Jews could also live in accordance with the Law. With these parallel assertions, Paul has now called upon the audience itself to testify that Jews and non-Jews are capable of *both* observance *and* neglect of the Law.³⁹⁰ The double cross categorization that Paul intends is a type of Halsam *et al.*'s third category of "group consensualization," in which disputants "work to arrive at a common understanding and a

³⁸⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 221.

³⁸⁹ Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor*, 144. Stowers disputes the unity of the interlocutor throughout a letter. Stanley K. Stowers, "Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography," *JTS* 56, no. 2 (2005): 561-65. In my work, I test Thorsteinsson's hypothesis and find it very helpful. Furthermore, Stowers faults Thorsteinsson for his reliance on epistolary examples of the continuation of the identity of the interlocutor but fails to show why the difference in genres should not impact the use of the interlocutor.

³⁹⁰ I do not mean that Paul believed that non-Jews were to follow all the commandments for Jews in the Torah. As I will show in the next chapter, the Law provided ordinances for both Jews and non-Jews, but not necessarily the same ordinances.

shared stereotypic response.”³⁹¹ This raises the possibility that the relevant stereotype to be applied to non-Jewish Jesus followers may not be the same as that for all other non-Jews. Thus Paul can say “distress and calamity [are] against each human’s life [who is] producing evil, Jew first and then Greek, but good repute and honor and peace to all doing good, Jew first and Greek” (2:9-10).

Paul concludes with the observation that the true believer is one who has experienced “circumcision of the heart” (vv. 27-29). In this he echoes the Hebrew Scriptures (Deut 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4) and, among others, Philo of Alexandria (*Spec. Laws I*, 6-10). In all of this, Paul intimates that the stereotype of non-Jews needs to be modified. But this is a Jewish stereotype that needs modification, not a non-Jewish one. Paul, we may conclude, is engaged in a dialogue with Jews about the modification of a Jewish stereotype. The introduction of the interlocutor allows Paul to raise difficult issues with a Jewish audience without alienating his audience.

Dialogue Continues in Chapter 3

Throughout ch. 3, Paul continues his dialogue with the interlocutor, who acquires a voice at 3:1 and there asks first whether, if circumcision and uncircumcision are indistinguishable (2:27-29), there is any benefit to being a Jew. Throughout the chapter the interlocutor questions (at 3:9, 27, and 31) Paul about the place of the Jews in the divine economy.³⁹²

³⁹¹ Halsam, et al., “Stereotypes: How Groups Represent and Change Social Reality,” 165.

³⁹² Here I am following Stowers’ analysis of the dialogue, in particular his identification of the speaker, as to whether it is Paul or the interlocutor raising questions. Stanley K. Stowers, “Paul’s Dialogue with a Fellow Jew in Romans 3:1-9,” *CBQ* 46, no. 4 (1984): 707-22. Stowers, *Rereading*, 165, 233, and 34.

1. “What then is the advantage [of being] a Jew, or the value of circumcision?” (3:1)
2. “What is the consequence? Do we have no advantage?” (3:9)
3. “What then becomes of boasting?” (3:27)
4. “Do we then nullify the Law because of faithfulness?” (3:31a)

In each of these questions, the interlocutor expresses concern about the relevance of Jewish practices in Paul’s gospel. Then Paul and the interlocutor participate in a Socratic dialogue. Paul uses questions (vv. 3, 5, 7-8) to lead the interlocutor to agreement that, because God is faithful, both the covenant with Israel stands (v. 4) *and* God’s wrath against any unfaithful among the Jews is justified (v.6). I emphasize here that Paul does *not* say that God’s wrath is directed against Jews who are faithful to the Torah but it is directed against those not faithful (vv.3-6; as also in 2:25-29). Stowers cites intra-Jewish discussions on the relationship between divine mercy and justice, noting that “There are many texts that might be cited to show that 3:1-9 does indeed make sense as an inner Jewish discussion and that the issues discussed are central to ancient Jewish thought about God.”³⁹³

The intra-Jewish texture of the dialogue is reinforced by the catena in 3:10-18 that speaks to humanity’s universal need for justification. Nestle-Aland and English versions attribute the verses to Psalms (5, 10, 14, 35, and 139) and Isaiah 59:8. These same verses also appear together following Ps 13:3 LXX. Rahlfs attributes the presence of these verses in the latter location to the influence of Romans 3:10-18: the Greek version of the

³⁹³ Stowers, “Romans 3:1-9,” 718.

Psalm was modified to include the verses from Romans.³⁹⁴ Arguing to the contrary, first Robert A. Kraft and later Martin C. Albl argued that the catena is probably a pre-Pauline Jewish composition.³⁹⁵ First of all, the catena matches the verses found in several editions of the Septuagint after Psalm 13:3.³⁹⁶ Further, a modification of the Psalm would be within the tradition of producing new Psalms, as found within the canon and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, from the combination of other texts.³⁹⁷ Kraft and Albl argue that it is unlikely that Rom, or any *Christian* catena, was composed early enough to be disseminated to such a diverse group of witnesses by the mid-third century.³⁹⁸ Scholars note too that Paul modified other scriptures, notably Hab 2:4 at Rom 1:17 and Gal 3:11, but no other similar use of scripture by Paul had a like impact on the transmission of the LXX. Finally, unlike

³⁹⁴ Cited in Robert A. Kraft, "Christian Transmission of Greek Jewish Scriptures: A Methodological Probe," in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique* (eds. A. Benoit, et al.; Paris: De Boccard, 1978), 220.

³⁹⁵ Martin C. Albl, "And Scripture Cannot be Broken:" *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999), 171-76. Kraft, "Christian Transmission", 206-26.

³⁹⁶ Kraft, "Christian Transmission," 220-21.

³⁹⁷ Kraft, "Christian Transmission," 220.

³⁹⁸ Christopher Stanley provided a partial, but not necessarily comprehensive list of the versions with Psalm 13 in this form. Stanley argues that Paul himself composed the catena: "The presence of this entire section at the end of Ps 13.3 . . . in countless manuscripts of the Septuagint is perhaps the clearest evidence . . . for the influence of the New Testament citations on the textual tradition of the Septuagint. Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 88. Footnote 17 on page 88 describes the manuscripts with the catena in Psalm 13. Nowhere in *Language of Scripture* does Stanley engage Kraft's article, including the persuasive arguments Kraft marshals in favor of a pre-Pauline composition of the catena.

other Christian emendations of the LXX, this catena has no particular Christian – much less Christological – point.³⁹⁹

Albl goes on to point out that similar texts were usually directed by particular groups against opponents. He cites *Pss.Sol.* 17:15-20 as one of these and concludes:

The life-setting in which *Psalms of Solomon* 17 was produced is also the most likely setting for the production of our catena [Rom 3:10-18]: a group considering themselves righteous polemicizes against sinners, be they gentiles *or Jewish supporters of the gentiles*. For these “righteous” groups, the catena was accepted as an authoritative addition to scripture (emphasis added).⁴⁰⁰

Albl’s work suggests that the catena may have been cited by his opponents *against* Paul, a Jewish supporter of Gentiles. When Paul uses it here, after he has established the need of both non-Jews *and Jews* to be made righteous, he turns the force of the passage back against his opponents.

In all of this, Paul uses an interlocutor to engage in an intra-Jewish debate using Jewish scriptures and arguments. For the debate to be coherent, the audience must recognize that the interlocutor and Paul are both Jewish. The dialogic and pedagogic nature of the diatribe depends on the audience’s identification with the interlocutor. In this case, Paul, by using a Jewish interlocutor, implies that the audience to which he is writing is also Jewish.

³⁹⁹ Albl, “*Scripture*,” 171-77. Kraft, “Christian Transmission,” 220-22.

⁴⁰⁰ Albl, “*Scripture*,” 177. For Psalms of Solomon 17 the probable setting was the aftermath of the Roman occupation and destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul’s Letters* (CB; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 89-109.

Recapitulation: Paul's Language to Establish a Common Identity

In this part of my argument, I have analyzed Paul's use of first person and second person pronouns, his use of Ἰσραήλ, an insider term, in Rom, and his use of the Jewish stereotype of the idolatrous, fornicating non-Jew. My goal was to demonstrate that Paul worked, first, to establish a common Jewish identity with the audience and, second, to disarm their negative stereotype of non-Jews. As I establish these interpretations, I also establish the identity of the audience of Rom as non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers, who share some of the same stereotypes with Paul, and to whom Paul writes as to fellow Jewish Jesus followers.

Negotiating Group Boundaries: Romans 14:1-15:13⁴⁰¹

The Issues

My description of the audience as composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers may be challenged by scholars who see in Rom 14-15 a dispute between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers over dietary and calendric laws for the community, two well-known boundary markers between Jews and non-Jews. The argument is made that Paul enters the discussion in order to heal a division between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers so that the entire community will unite in support of his mission. As the

⁴⁰¹ The first question one must ask is the length of the pericope in question. Carl N. Toney compiled a catalog of the decisions by scholars through the ages on the proper boundaries of this pericope. Of 17 scholars, 12 argue that it runs to 15:13 (and one to 15:14), three to 15:6 and one to 15:7. Carl N. Toney, *Paul's Inclusive Ethic: Resolving Community Conflicts and Promoting Mission in Romans 14-15* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 49-50. I will follow the logic of the majority (principally the use of προσλαμβάνω, χάρις and εἰρήνη throughout the entire passage and use of δὴ in 15:7 signaling the continuation and conclusion of the previous argument) and analyze the section 14:1 to 15:13. Were I to use the shorter pericope, I would then need to consider 15:7-13 separately.

adverse impact on my argument of this argument prevailing is obvious, I must address the issue directly, and do so here.

In analyzing these chapters, I find social identity theory surprisingly helpful. I start by noting that when Paul wishes to modify the attitudes and behaviors of his audience, Paul, by definition, wants to exercise a leadership position. Hogg characterizes leadership as a group process of influence “in which one person transforms other members of the group so that they adopt a vision (often a new vision) and are galvanized into pursuing the vision on behalf of the group.”⁴⁰² Hogg includes among the qualifications for leadership the active enhancing and maintaining of the group’s social identity.⁴⁰³ An important aspect of group identity is the establishment of group boundaries that define and maintain the distinctive identity of the ingroup.⁴⁰⁴ In line with her definition of ingroups as “bounded communities of mutual trust and differentiation from others,” Brewer describes the nature and role of these boundaries.

Symbols and behaviors that differentiate the ingroup from local outgroups become particularly important here, to reduce the risk that ingroup benefits will be inadvertently extended to outgroup members, and to ensure that oneself is recognized as a member of the ingroup and entitled to those benefits. Assimilation and differentiation between groups is thus mutually reinforcing, along with ethnocentric preference for ingroup interactions and institutions.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² Hogg, “Social Psychology of Leadership,” 716-33, here 728.

⁴⁰³ Hogg, “Social Psychology of Leadership,” 728.

⁴⁰⁴ Tajfel, “Group Differentiation,” 77-98.

⁴⁰⁵ Brewer, “Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,” 700.

Like passwords for military encampments, the distinctive symbols and behaviors of boundary markers provide the individual admittance to the protection and other benefits of belonging to the ingroup and husband resources for the sole benefit of the ingroup.

I catalogued in chapter 2, the widely-remarked, distinctive practices of Jews – circumcision, food taboos and the practice of the Sabbath – that served as boundary markers for the Jews in Rome. In Rom 14-15, Paul describes a division – whether an actual or potential division is among matters to be settled – within the community of Jesus followers over diet and days of worship. Paul primarily addresses a group whom he calls the “strong” (14:1; 15:1), admonishing them not to despise the “weak in faith:” teetotaling (14:21) vegetarians (14:2) who wish to limit observation of holy days to particular days in the week (14:5). The “strong,” in contrast, eat “anything” (14:2) and consider all days alike (14:5). While Paul’s strongest words are directed to the “strong,” he also urges the “weak” to avoid passing judgment on the “strong” (14:3-4). In the text, Paul aligns himself with the “strong,” rhetorically (“We who are strong . . .” [15:1]) and theologically (“I . . . am convinced in the Lord that nothing is unclean in itself” [14:14]), but is adamant that the practices of both parties are acceptable, since God has welcomed them both (14:3). He exhorts both sides to be accommodating (the strong to be welcoming (14:1) and the weak to avoid judgments (14:3)) just as Christ was accommodating to humanity (15:1-12).

Debate on this section of Rom has centered generally on whether Paul is addressing a real issue dividing Jewish Jesus followers from non-Jewish Jesus followers

or whether this is general paraenesis, based on Paul's experience in other communities.⁴⁰⁶

Below I explore both of these readings. Then I propose a third alternative, that the "weak" are non-Judeans, originally practitioners of the traditional religions, who are now Jewish Jesus followers. It is this group who now are eager to prove their Jewish identity by emphasizing the typically Jewish practices of dietary and Sabbath observance. Social identity theory predicts exactly this kind of boundary-intensifying behavior from those who are least central to the ingroup, those on the margin of the ingroup for whatever reason, including newcomers.⁴⁰⁷

Traditional Explanations and Their Weakness

Paul addresses the necessity of two of the principal Jewish identity markers: dietary restrictions and Sabbath observance. Some historians point to this controversy as further evidence for an ethnic split produced by the Edict of Claudius. Even if one argues

⁴⁰⁶ Another explanation may be that the food conflict Paul addresses is that recorded in the controversy narrative in Mark 7. At Mark 7:15, Jesus says "there is nothing outside a person entering into the person that can defile him, but the things inside a person coming out of the person are the things that defile" with the parenthetical aside to the audience at v. 19b, "Thus he declared all foods clean" (NRSV). Some Jewish scholars argue that the controversy is about whether the Pharisees' dictum that using dirty hands to eat kosher food results in ritual impurity. According to Lev 11:39-40 (and parallels), carrying the carcass of a clean animal causes impurity. Scholars conclude that the Pharisees' dictum is an extension of but contrary to the Torah and indeed represents an innovation by the Pharisees. These two findings, they argue, were recognized by the early rabbis. In Mark, so this line goes, Jesus resists the innovation in favor of the original provisions of the Torah ("You nullify the word of God in favor of your tradition . . ." Mark 7:13). See Menahem Kister, "Law, Morality, and Rhetoric in Some Sayings of Jesus," in *Studies in Ancient Midrash* (ed. J. L. Kugel; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 145-54, here 151-54. Yair Furstenberg, "Defilement Penetrating the Body: A New Understanding of Contamination in Mark 7.15," *NTS* 54, no. 2 (2008): 176-200. Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 102-28. Paul's comments are too cryptic to demonstrate definitively that this is the same issue being debated in Rome. It does, however, point out that the Jewish rules of eating were not uniformly understood in the first century and intra-Jewish debates over food laws might be expected.

⁴⁰⁷ Cynthia L. Pickett and Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Role of Exclusion in Maintaining Ingroup Inclusion," in *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion* (eds. D. Abrams, et al.; New York and Hove Sussex: Psychology Press, 2005), 89-110.

that the Edict of Claudius had little or no impact, a number of factors point to such a split, the first traditional reading of this section. We commented in chapter 2 on the literary references of Greeks and Romans to the Jewish practice of avoiding certain foods, a practice memorialized in Jewish stories of faithful Jews restricting their diets in Gentile settings (e.g., Daniel 1:3-16; Tobit 1:10-11; AddEsther 4:17; Josephus *Vita* 13-14), to avoid consuming food previously offered to idols or unclean in itself. Paul also uses κοινός (14:14) and καθάρος (14:20) to refer to “impure” and “clean” food respectively, a distinctive Jewish use of the terms.⁴⁰⁸ This same use appears in Mark 7:2 where the author stops to explain the unusual meaning of the term to his audience.⁴⁰⁹ According to this reading, Jewish Jesus followers condemn those Jesus followers who do not follow the dietary restrictions, while non-Jewish Jesus followers brand as “weak” these same Jewish Jesus followers.⁴¹⁰

Despite this evidence, contrary views are still argued. In his 1999 monograph, Mark Reasoner championed the view that the “dispute” between the two groups is not

⁴⁰⁸ “In general κοινός, like ἅγιος, is used only of things like these [viz., food, temple, apostate Jews], but in Ep. Ar., 315 it is also used of men . . . Philo does not have κοινός in the sense of ‘profane.’ This sense seems to have developed on Jewish soil. At any rate, there are no instances in non-Jewish secular Greek.” Friedrich Hauck, κοινός, κτλ. *TDNT* 3.791. “Indeed, the lack of non-Jewish sources using κοινός to mean ‘profane’ is the strongest evidence in favor of viewing the abstinence of the ‘weak’ as based on Jewish attitudes toward food.” Mark Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14.1-15.13 in Context* (SNTSMS; vol. 103; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 98. Jewett, *Romans*, 859. Toney, *Paul's Inclusive Ethic*, 56-60.

⁴⁰⁹ Toney, *Paul's Inclusive Ethic*, 57.

⁴¹⁰ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.700. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 72-74. Reidar Hvalik, “Jewish Believers and Jewish Influence in the Roman Church until the Early Second Century,” in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (eds. O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalik; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 179-216, here 194-95.

based on ethnicity but on other factors.⁴¹¹ Reasoner concludes that the “strong” and the “weak” represent different socio-economic classes; the “strong” speak Latin, and have more wealth and better connections, while the “weak,” speak Greek, immigrated from the East, and occupy a much lower socio-economic class.⁴¹² Quite apart from any religious dietary restrictions, Reasoner documented the prevalence of restrictive dietary practices in the Greco-Roman world dating back to the 7th century B.C.E.⁴¹³ First century philosophical schools advocated vegetarianism as an ascetic practice.⁴¹⁴ Therefore, it is far from assured that only Jews would be avoiding meat and wine.

In evaluating these theories, I find that Paul sends mixed signals, in his selection both of the location of this discussion within the letter and of the language throughout this section. These chapters follow the general paraenesis contained in chapters 12 and 13. It is reasonable (or certainly not *unreasonable*) simply to assume that the problems dealt with here are also of a general nature, problems communities of Jesus followers might be expected to face. If the discussion deals with specific Roman Jewish practices and the accommodation of non-Jews to these practices, then the more powerful place to locate the argument would have been after chapters 9-11. There, the exhortations to non-Jews to avoid being obstreperous towards Jews would flow well from the olive tree

⁴¹¹ Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak*.

⁴¹² Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak*, 200-20. See particularly 218-20.

⁴¹³ A large percentage of Reasoner’s monograph is dedicated to this very subject. See particularly Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak*, 64-87.

³Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak*, 75-84.

metaphor and would reinforce Paul's point. Rather than do this, Paul inserted general paraenesis, chapters 12 and 13, between the two sections.

As to the language in the section, I note first that Paul makes no definitive identification of the "weak" with "Jews." In a letter in which ethnic terms are frequent, in which chs. 9-11 are concerned with relations between Jews and non-Jews, this is a puzzling omission if indeed Paul thought the "weak" were Jews. I also observe that Paul's use of κοινός and καθαρός in a specifically Jewish way is addressed to *both* the strong *and* the weak. Paul clearly assumes that the whole audience is familiar with the usage and will understand this terminology. The fact that Paul is able to use ethnically charged language without comment should lend support to the notion that all of his audience share an ethnic identity rather than that they are separated ethnically.

An Alternative to the Traditional Understandings

As stated above, I want to forward a different reading that supports my thesis that Paul believes he is writing to a Jewish audience. At 14:4, and again at 14:10a, Paul addresses one of the "weak," asking (in an accusatory way) "You, why do you (singular) judge someone else's servant (v. 4)/your brother (v. 10)?" The question reprises the theme of "judging" from ch. 2, when Paul speaks harshly to a Jewish interlocutor "who passes judgment" (2:1) and is later further identified as a "non-Judean Jew" (2:17). This interlocutor quizzed Paul on the continuing value of Jewish practices (3:1, 9). Earlier I worked with Thorsteinsson's thesis that in letters, unless there is a clear indication otherwise, the letter writer's interlocutor remains constant throughout the work.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁵ Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor*, 140-41.

Applying that principle here, Paul's interlocutor of 2:1, 2:17 and ch. 3 is the same person as the judgmental interlocutor of ch. 14. This interlocutor acts consistently, judging others – non-Jews in ch. 1 and those who do not observe Jewish dietary and calendrical regulations in ch. 14 – and is concerned to establish the continued value of Jewish practices in ch. 3 and, presumably, in chs. 14-15.⁴¹⁶

This notion of a non-Judean Jew advocating stricter observance of Jewish dietary and calendric regulations fits work in social identity theory on the behavior of those closest to the margins of a group. Cynthia L. Pickett and Marilyn B. Brewer studied the data showing that those members who perceive themselves as being least prototypical of the ingroup, perhaps because they are the newest members, are likely to be judgmental about intergroup behavior and the prospects for new members. In framing their discussion of the issue, they asked the question “. . . how is it that someone who knows that their position with a group is threatened or marginal feels that they have the authority to *judge whether others meet the standards for ingroup membership*” (emphasis added).⁴¹⁷ By analogy with the groups they studied, we might hypothesize that the “weak” are indeed Jews, but recently converted Jews anxious over their new religious status. The “weak” are establishing their identity as orthopraxic Jews by insisting on the continued relevance of the Jewish boundary markers.

⁴¹⁶ In Romans 11:18, Paul urges non-Judeans (v. 11:13) not to “boast against the branches.” Here is another tie back to Romans 2:17, to the one who calls himself a Jew and “boast(s) of God. . . .”

⁴¹⁷ Pickett and Brewer, “Role of Exclusion,” 90.

The weak then may be non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. But making that identification does not mean that the strong are necessarily non-Judean *non-Jewish* Jesus followers. In fact, if the weak are on the periphery of the Jewish community, the strong are more likely to be those at its center, closest to the prototype, hence Judean Jewish Jesus followers. They would be those who are themselves less observant in practice, or more accommodating to non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers (i.e., to those from Paul's eastern congregations), or both less observant and more accommodating. Secure in their own religious identity, they can be more receptive to other practices. This is Paul's attitude as well, based on his position in the controversy in Antioch and in his discussion on meat offered to idols in 1 Cor. After all, the default description of one who is not a highly observant Jewish Jesus follower is not a non-Jewish Jesus follower: a more assimilated Jewish Jesus follower also fits the category.⁴¹⁸

Identifying the tension as arising within the community of Jewish Jesus followers also resolves the question about the location of the subject in Rom. Paul does not treat it in chs.9-11 because it does not involve relations between Jews and non-Jews and follows well after Rom 13:8: "Owe nothing to no one except to love one another; for loving the other has fulfilled the law." In this way, Paul makes accommodating each other a boundary marker for Jesus followers.

⁴¹⁸ Here I follow Barclay's definition of assimilation as the measure of the individual's integration into the majority society, and their abandonment of the "peculiar customs and practices of their own minority community." Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews : Anomaly or Apostate?," 93.

Paul's Use of Scripture

A commitment to tradition and to the Hebrew Scriptures is now and was in antiquity an important identity marker for Jews.⁴¹⁹ In this section, I will focus on Paul's use of scripture in Romans particularly in comparison with his use in his other letters. On the assumption that the more "Jewish" Paul thought the audience the more frequent the references to the Hebrew Scriptures, I open with a summary of the relative frequency of references in Rom and in the other undisputed letters. This is followed by a study of Paul's use of Scripture in chs. 9-11 and in ch. 4.

Comparison with Paul's Use of Scripture in Other Letters

In a comparative study of Paul's use of scripture, I focused on direct quotations of the scriptures as identified by the editors of NA²⁷.⁴²⁰ I counted 60 direct quotations in Romans.⁴²¹ In contrast, three of the undisputed letters, Phil, 1 Thess, and Phlm have no

⁴¹⁹ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 167-71. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 424-26. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 1.

⁴²⁰ Since the publication of Richard Hays's *Echoes*, a substantial body of scholarly work has gone into analyzing which potential references are truly scriptural allusions and what the use of these allusions means for describing the audience of Romans. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1989). In addition to Hays' second work, Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005).], there is also a compilation of essays from the Paul and Scripture Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley eds, *As It is Written : Studying Paul's use of Scripture* (*Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series*; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008). I focus on "direct quotations" in order to keep my work manageable.

⁴²¹ NA²⁷ includes all direct quotes whether marked or unmarked. In the catena from 3:10-18 I have included each separate quotation in the count. From the NA²⁷ classification, I excluded a quotation at Rom 9:28 of Isa 28:22b. The editors have identified the quotation in the text by italicizing it, but have not italicized the marginal reference. At 9:27a, Paul introduces a quotation, "Isaiah cries out for the sake of Israel" followed by a direct quote of Isa 10:22 at 9:27b (parallel Hos 2:1). The general idea in Rom 9:28, the verse in question, is the same as Isa 28:22b (The Lord will execute swift judgement on the earth), and both use some of the same vocabulary (though not their morphology). Romans 9:28 is followed at 9:29 with another quotation introduction: "As Isaiah warned." The insertion of a new quotation marker at 9:29, rather than

quotations while the combined count for the remaining three, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians, is 34 direct quotations. The breakdown by letter and by major section of the Hebrew Scriptures is as follows.

Table 5
Quotations by Paul from Sections of the Hebrew Scriptures

	Letter <u>Total</u>	<u>Major section of Hebrew Bible</u>		
		<u>Torah</u>	<u>Prophets</u>	<u>Writings</u> ^{b.}
Romans ^{a.}	60	19	24	17
1 Corinthians	13	4	7	2
2 Corinthians	13	6	5	2
Galatians ^{c.}	8	7	1	0
Other letters ^d	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	94	36	37	21
% from Romans	64%	53%	65%	81%

- a. Count includes the catena of 3:10-18 as individual citations rather than one single quotation.
- b. Of which, citations from Psalms: 14 in Romans, 1 each in 1 and 2 Corinthians.
- c. Includes as one the references to the Abraham cycle in chs. 3 and 4.
- d. Phil, 1 Thes, Phlm.

The table shows that Paul's 60 direct quotations in Rom were composed of 19 quotations from the Torah, 24 from the Prophets, and 17 from the Writings. These 60 quotations compare with 34 combined in 1 and 2 Cor and Gal. While combined the other three letters are essentially twice the length, Rom has over 75 percent more direct quotations. Put another way, I count an explicit quotation (on average) every seven verses in Rom, as

allowing the introductory phrase at 9:27 to continue to control, adds weight to the probability that Paul did not intend 9:28 to be a direct quotations.

compared with every 19 verses in Gal (outside ch. 4), every 20 verses in 1 Cor, and every 33 verses in 2 Cor (average of one every 25 verses in other letters).⁴²²

Not only does Paul quote scripture relatively more frequently in Romans, he quotes fairly evenly across the Hebrew Scriptures: the 17 quotations from the Writings represent 28 percent of all quotations in Rom, while the 4 quotations in the other three letters equal 12 percent. Paul quotes Isa 17 times, more than any other book, but references Pss, from the Writings, almost as often, 13 times. In total, the editors of NA²⁷ identify direct quotes from 13 individual books in Rom.

It is not the case that Paul could not use the Hebrew Scriptures in his other letters. To take one example, consider the resources Paul uses in his argument in Phlm. As in Rom, there Paul was looking for specific actions from the addressee. One would expect that Paul would marshal his strongest arguments to convince Philemon to acknowledge a common religious identity with Onesimus. Resources to support his argument in the Hebrew Scriptures are vast. The most obvious would be the Exodus account of the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He could have compared the slave Joseph's prison time (Gen 39-41) with that of Onesimus, both representing divinely ordained plans. Paul could have alluded to Scriptural injunctions such as “. . . remember that you too were once slaves in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God ransomed you” (Deut. 15:15 NAB). Paul used none of the Hebrew Scriptures to buttress his

⁴²² Christopher Stanley has a different count, based on fewer direct quotations in all cases. Thus he computes one direct quotation every ten verses in Rom, every 21 verses in Gal, every 36 verses in 1 Cor, and every 42 verses in 2 Cor. Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture : The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 142. While the exact numbers are in question, the conclusion critical for my study remains the same: direct quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures are more than twice as common in Rom as in the other letters.

entreaty. In Rom, Paul demonstrates his ability to marshal the Scriptures to support his arguments.

The point to be drawn from the comparison is that Paul, marshaling the arguments and resources he believed would most likely forward his case to the Romans, reckoned that the audience was conversant with a broad range of Scripture, and considered these Scriptures authoritative in their lives while a similar tactic would fail with Philemon. In chapter 2, describing the Jewish situation in the Roman Empire, I remarked on the scarcity and inaccuracy of references by Greek and Roman writers to the same Scriptures. If these Scriptures were unfamiliar to the general population, it is not surprising that Paul does not use Scripture in his argument in Philemon. What must be explained is his reliance on Scripture in Romans!

Before studying Paul's uses in detail, I wish to forestall objections about ascribing too much Biblical literacy to the Roman Jesus followers. In *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*, Christopher Stanley analyzes Paul's use of quotations. Stanley's thesis, that Paul's audiences were probably not very familiar with the scriptures he quoted, might appear at odds with my thesis that Paul uses scripture heavily because he believed the audience considers them authoritative. In fact, his analysis supports my thesis.

For each letter, Stanley is interested in describing how an "informed audience," a "competent audience," and a "minimal audience" – classified by the degree of competence with the Hebrew Scriptures – would understand the quotations Paul uses. On Rom, he concludes:

Unlike his own churches, Paul could not assume that the Romans would accept his message on the basis of his own apostolic authority. But he must have felt confident that they would respect the authority of Scripture. Thus, even if he was [*sic.*] wrong about what the Romans actually knew from the Jewish Scriptures, he could anticipate that his use of biblical argumentation would lend credibility to his positions and enhance his reputation with the Romans in advance of his impending visit. In the end, that was all he really needed.⁴²³

Elsewhere, Stanley writes:

“In the case of Paul's quotations, the ‘implied readers’ are Christians who are (a) broadly familiar with the Greek text of the Jewish Scriptures, (b) able to recognize immediately how specific quotations fit into the developing argument of his letter, and (c) willing to accept his quotations as valid renderings of the authoritative text. But these inferences apply only to the ‘implied readers’ of Paul's quotations.”⁴²⁴

Stanley concludes that it is “unlikely that many members of Paul's first-century churches would have matched the profile of the ‘implied readers’ of Paul's quotations.”⁴²⁵

At bottom, Stanley's preoccupation with the “actual” audience is not my concern.

I am interested in the audience constructed in the letter by Paul, the audience *to which Paul thought he was writing*, the implied audience. This implied audience, Stanley agrees, accepts these scriptures as authoritative.

⁴²³ Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 170.

⁴²⁴ Christopher D. Stanley, “‘Pearls before Swine’: Did Paul's Audience Understand His Biblical Quotations?” *NovT* 41 (1999) no 2, 124-44, here 143.

⁴²⁵ Christopher Stanley, “‘Pearls before Swine’,” 144. Stanley's generally pessimistic conclusion about the ability of Paul's actual, historical audiences to understand properly the scriptural quotations in their original context has been challenged vigorously by Brian J. Abasciano who contends that, *inter alia*, Stanley ignores the communal nature of reading scripture in antiquity. In that setting, the best educated in the communities to which Paul wrote would have had access to the texts Paul quotes and would have been charged by the community with interpreting the quotations Paul uses. Further, the practice in Christian communities was to read texts such as Paul's letters a number of times, insuring that the quotations would have been well rehearsed. B.J. Abasciano, “Diamonds in the Rough: A Reply to Christopher Stanley Concerning the Reader Competency of Paul's Original Audiences,” *NovT* 49 (2007): 153-83. Following Abasciano's logic, one would conclude that Paul, aware of these dynamics in his own communities, and extrapolating them to the Roman community he had not yet visited, could assume a scripturally literate readership, just as the implied audience of his letters suggests.

Paul's Use of Scripture in Rom 9:1-10:13

Chapters 9-11 contain an especially heavy dose of Scripture. While Paul's 60 Scripture quotations throughout Rom appear on average once every 7 verses, in these three chapters, 90 verses in total, Paul makes 35 citations, a rate more than twice his average. Put another way, in less than one-quarter of Rom, Paul packs almost 60 percent of his citations.

In these chapters, Paul deals, first, with the situation of Jews who do not follow Jesus: where do they fit in Paul's theology? Are God's promises to all Jews still operative? How do non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, those in Pauline communities in the East, relate to them and to these promises?⁴²⁶ While these are the presenting questions for this section (as they were, in a sense, in ch. 3), Paul moves from consideration of the status of those Jews who do not follow Jesus to an explanation of the relationship of his communities to Israel. To address these questions, Paul explores the scriptural texts that contain those promises, to establish that the experience of Jews who do not follow Jesus and his gospel are both compatible with God's faithfulness.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ I recognize that this perspective is, in the history of Rom exegesis, a relatively recent development. Mark Reasoner points out that prior to the latter half of the twentieth century, essentially all of the scholarly effort was devoted to questions about human free will and divine predestination. Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 95-119. Cranfield's introduction to this section emphasizes, *inter alia*, the necessity for Paul to address the Scriptural basis for the lack of enthusiasm among Jews to become Jesus' followers. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.445-50.

⁴²⁷ These are issues that Paul addresses only one other time in his letters, and that in Gal, a letter addressed to non-Judeans Paul wishes to deter from becoming Jews. There, Paul aligns Mount Sinai, Hagar, Ishmael, slavery and the non-Jesus-following Jews of his day (Gal 4:21-29).

The fact that Paul devotes three chapters to these questions and employs an unusually heavy dose of Scripture in his argument strongly indicates that Paul was addressing Jews who now follow Jesus: who else would have these concerns and who else would be persuaded by the Jewish Scriptures? Moreover, Paul uses the Scriptures in ways demonstrating that his implied audience is Jewish. Here, I will address the first half of this section, from 9:1 to 10:13, demonstrating that Paul is using Jewish resources in a Jewish way that would be appealing to a Jewish audience but not to a non-Jewish audience.

Romans 9:1-6 presents the situation Paul will address: there are Jews who do not follow Jesus. How can this be? In answer, beginning in 9:7, Paul describes the willful, seemingly arbitrary actions of God throughout the history of Israel in ways understandable to Jews but not to non-Jews. God chose the second born sons Isaac and Jacob over their elder brothers Ishmael and Esau (vv. 7-13) and hardened Pharaoh's heart. This pattern of divine willfulness is laid alongside the apparent election in the current time of non-Jews, "the objects of wrath" (v. 22), who are saved through Jesus Christ. Paul claims that this last election is God's plan to "make known the riches of his glory" (v. 23). Paul cites Hos 2:23 and 1:10 to demonstrate the basis for the LORD's willingness to select non-Jews as his people (vv. 25-26). Quotations from Isaiah (10:22 and 1:9) provide assurance that even though most Jews are not Jesus followers, a faithful remnant will survive, or else the sons of Israel would "have fared like Sodom and Gomorrah" (vv. 27-29). In other words, Paul contrasts human expectations of "normalcy"

with divine willfulness. Non-Jews have been chosen; many Jews have not participated in this action.

One way to see my point that Paul here is addressing a Jewish audience, is to consider the converse: would such an argument be persuasive to a non-Jewish audience (assuming they had any interest in the entire discussion in the first place)? Looked at from that perspective, it is difficult to understand how a group of non-Jews, not thoroughly embedded in the Scriptures, would be impressed with Paul's argument or even how they would be able to follow its elliptical references. Stern's compilation of references to Jews and things Jewish by ancient Roman and Greek writers shows no references to Isaac, Rachel, Esau, Jacob, Hosea, Isaiah, Sodom or Gomorrah.⁴²⁸ Non-Jews would not have understood the references to the patriarchal narrative. Nor, as it happens, would they have understood the references to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. The popularly told story comparable to the Jewish Exodus narrative is of a diseased population expelled from Egypt that journeyed to what became Israel (e.g., *c. Apion* II.1-21). Paul cites Hosea and Isaiah by name, implying that the audience would recognize them as authoritative, but why would Paul do so were the audience non-Jews? While a non-Jewish audience would struggle with all of these references, Paul presented them in a manner which demonstrated that he believed they would be persuasive. My conclusion is that Paul did not think that he was writing to a non-Jewish audience but to a Jewish one.

⁴²⁸ The index for Stern's work has a single entry for Isaac from Apollonius Molon and Alexander Polyhistor (both 1st century B.C.E). Apollonius' simply says that Abraham bore a son *Gelos* (I.150), but Alexander Polyhistor has a brief account of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac (I.159 [161]). None of Rachel, Esau, or Jacob have entries from Greco-Roman writers. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*.

In Rom 10:1-4, Paul repeats his love for Jews who do not follow Jesus, and describes their inability to understand the relationship of Jesus and the Law – despite their zealousness: “For I testify to them that they have a divine zeal, but not discernment” (10:2). In 10:4, Paul writes that τέλος γάρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (“Christ is the goal/perfection of the Law for justification to all who are faithful”), expressing some form of identity between Christ and the Law. As I will explain in the next chapter, I read 10:4 as expressing Paul’s conviction that Christ is the fulfillment of the promises of the Law for the salvation of non-Judean non-Jews.

In the next section, vv. 5-13, Paul continues to explore the Scriptures and the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers. The interpretation of this section is as contested as of any passage in Romans.⁴²⁹ A popular reading concludes Paul uses Deut 30:11-14 as a frame, on which to hang other texts, to demonstrate that Christ and salvation by faithfulness were foreseen in the Scriptures. Fitzmyer proffers “the usual explanation,” that the point of vv. 5-13 is that instead of expending futile effort trying to observe the law in order to be righteous (as do Jews), salvation is easily accessible to one who confesses that the risen Jesus is Lord and dedicates oneself to God in Jesus.⁴³⁰ A logical conclusion from this interpretation is that Paul views Law observance for everyone as futile. Stowers denies that Paul implies that there is anything difficult about observing the Law or that Paul believes that the Law has been annulled. Rather the

⁴²⁹ “Considerable dispute reigns about how this passage works.” Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 343. For summaries of the history of scholarship see Dunn, *Romans*, 2.602-05. M. Jack Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’: Romans 10:6-10 within the Purpose of the Letter,” in *Christian History and Interpretation* (eds. W. R. Farmer, et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 289-312.

⁴³⁰ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 587-88. Byrne has a similar reading. Byrne, *Romans*, 317.

passage “announces the benefit brought about by Jesus’ faithfulness . . . that God had now acted toward . . . [non-Judean, non-Jews] as he had once acted toward [Jews].”⁴³¹ Jewett too sees nothing in the passage to deny the continued efficacy of the Law, but argues that “the character called Righteousness by Faith shows that . . . zealous programs to usher in the messianic age through obedience to this or that law were repudiated by Scripture itself.”⁴³²

M. Jack Suggs suggested that Paul is preparing for his trip to Jerusalem where he believes opponents are quoting Deut 30:11-14 against his gospel to non-Judean non-Jews.⁴³³ In that context, Suggs believes that Paul composed this section carefully so as not to antagonize his opponents any further.⁴³⁴ I would second Suggs’ observation that the section is carefully composed, but make two modifications. First, I would suggest that Paul would raise adverse Scripture passages only if he believed they were also being quoted against him in Rome. It is, I suggest, an issue in Rome as well as in Jerusalem. It is, after all, the subject of the dialogue in Rom 2-3.

Secondly, I dispute the identification of Deut 30:11-14 as the adverse Scripture. It seems much more likely to me that Paul’s opponents are citing Lev 18:5 (“You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the LORD” [NRSV]), which Paul quotes in Rom 10:5, and it is to this verse that Paul is reacting. In the analysis

⁴³¹ Stowers, *Rereading*, 310.

⁴³² Jewett, *Romans*, 622-29.

⁴³³ Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’,” 294-98.

⁴³⁴ Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’,” 303.

that follows, it is that latter proposition which I will explore, viz., how Paul works to reinterpret Lev 18:5.⁴³⁵

As I read Rom 10:5-13, Paul's intent is to acknowledge and then rebut an argument based on Jewish Scriptures using Jewish modes of arguing employing different texts from the same Jewish Scriptures. To construct his argument, Paul explicitly cites two authors of Scripture, Moses (v.5) and "Righteousness out of Faithfulness" (ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη, v. 6). Jewett describes the references to Righteousness out of Faithfulness as a personification of righteousness which comes out of faith.⁴³⁶ Jewett goes on to stress that Righteousness out of Faithfulness does not negate the teachings of Moses, for that would contradict Paul's assertion in Rom 9:6 that the Law has not failed.⁴³⁷ Together, Paul and Righteousness out of Faithfulness engage in a form of Jewish Biblical exegesis, a *peshet*, a mode of explaining Biblical verses using the formula "that is . . ." ⁴³⁸ Paul can assume that his argument will be successful based on agreement with the audience of a key Jewish rule for interpreting scripture, Hillel's rule 2: the unity of Torah requires that all verses must be consistent with all other verses, and

⁴³⁵ Whether Paul's concern is Lev 18:5 or Deut 30:11-14 is less important to my argument than considering how Paul argues.

⁴³⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 625.

⁴³⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 625. I would venture further and suggest that by Righteousness out of Faithfulness Paul is alluding to God as the Author of the Scriptures. As I read the letter, the theme of Rom is the faithfulness of God to God's own promises contained in the Scriptures. On this interpretation, Paul is neither contradicting nor nullifying Moses' injunction to live according to the Law, but is citing God as authoring a still more fundamental injunction which Paul will proceed to explicate. In classical rhetoric, this would be classed as an *a minore ad maius* argument, arguing from the lesser to the greater. In this case, if Moses says something which is true, then certainly a divine proclamation must be even more true.

⁴³⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 622, 1017.

therefore each verse may be interpreted in light of a second verse.⁴³⁹ In the course of his argument, Paul cites Lev 18:5; Deut 8:17a (identical to Deut 9:4), 30:12-14; Ps 106:26; and Isa 28:16, with an allusion to Hab 2:4. That is, Paul references the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Paul is engaged in a debate about the Jewish Law with Jews taking place before Jews.⁴⁴⁰ To demonstrate this, I present my analysis of the verses.

Paul opens at Rom 10:5 with a citation of the disputed verse, Lev 18:5. Here, Paul acknowledges Moses as the author who “writes concerning the righteousness from the Law that ‘the human doing these things shall live by them’ [ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς].” This is a non-polemical abbreviation of the original, an exhortation to follow the divine statutes. In this first verse, then, Paul affirms the Law, offering a simple attestation to its continuing efficacy and realizability.⁴⁴¹

In Rom 10:6, Paul introduces the strategies in his argument, beginning with Righteousness out of Faithfulness, the author of the next citations. Jewett and Stowers point out parallels to this personification of righteousness, both in the Jewish Scriptures (e.g. Ps 85:11 LXX, “righteousness and peace will kiss”) and in popular philosophical works.⁴⁴² Because of the principle that all Scripture must be compatible, it is not necessary to argue that the citations from Righteousness out of Faithfulness have more

⁴³⁹ Salo W. Baron and Joseph L. Blau, *Judaism: Postbiblical and Talmudic Period* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill Educational, 1954), 102-06.

⁴⁴⁰ I refer again to Watson’s argument that Paul is a Jew engaged in reading and interpreting Jewish Scriptures in conversation with other Jews. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 1.

⁴⁴¹ Jewett, *Romans*, 624.

⁴⁴² Jewett, *Romans*, 625. Stowers, *Rereading*, 309.

authority than those penned by Moses in Lev 18:5. In 10:6, the particle δὲ (ἢ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει) marks a change in speaker, not necessarily a contrast to Moses. At the same time, the reference to or, perhaps better, the presence of Righteousness out of Faithfulness certainly evokes other allusions: Rom 1:17, itself a reference to Hab 2:4 (“the righteous one will live out of faithfulness”); Rom 4:9 to the person of Abraham (“Faithfulness was accounted to Abraham for righteousness”); most importantly Rom 3:30, and Paul’s affirmation that God will make righteous the uncircumcised through the faithfulness of Christ.⁴⁴³

Bearing all of these connotations, Righteousness out of Faithfulness proclaims a new oracle, a conflation of Deut 8:17a LXX (“do not say in your heart”) and Deut 30:12b (“who will go up into the heaven”). This melding of verses would also meld the two thoughts from these sections of Deut. Deuteronomy 8:17, in its entirety, completes an exhortation to the Hebrew people not to take credit for all that the Lord has done for them in bringing them out of bondage in Egypt (Deut 8:14-16). Deuteronomy 30:12 reminds the people that the provisions of the covenant to which they are bound are not difficult to learn or maintain: “It [the book of the Law] is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it’.” Exactly here, Paul adds his commentary to the new scripture verse, using the peshet formula: “that is [τοῦτ’ ἐστίν], to bring Christ down.” The total effect is stunning. The citation of Deut 8:17a reminds the audience that the deliverance from Egypt, like the deliverance from bondage Christ brings to the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers of

⁴⁴³ See Stowers, *Rereading*, 237-42.

Paul's congregation, was provided freely, indeed initiated before the LORD gave the Law at Sinai. While Deut 30:12 was meant to refer to bringing the Law from heaven, Paul reorients it to bringing down the Christ. In a Jewish context, Paul would be understood to be equating Christ with the Law. Since the whole citation is by Righteousness out of Faithfulness, which is associated with the salvation of non-Judean non-Jews, and since Paul has affirmed the continuation of the Law in v. 5, the conclusion may be drawn that for non-Judean non-Jews Christ is the equivalent to the Law for Jews.

Romans 10:7-8 continues the rhetorical pattern, with Righteousness out of Faithfulness citing Scripture for which Paul provides a commentary. In v. 7, Righteousness out of Faithfulness recasts Deut 30:13, substituting the phrase "down to the abyss" (generally attributed to Ps 106:26 [LXX 105:26]) for "across the sea." Paul then adds a comment parallel to that in v. 6: "that is to bring Christ up from the dead." In 10:8, Righteousness out of Faithfulness cites Deut 30:14 that assures the Israelites that the Law is close to them: "it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe" (NRSV). Paul comments "that is, the word of faithfulness, which we preach."

After silently yet graciously excusing Righteousness out of Faithfulness from further duty, Paul explains in vv. 9 and 10 why the word is near to his congregations. It is, in a sense, a reiteration of the argument in Rom 2 and 3: one faithful in the heart achieves righteousness. In vv. 11 and 13, Paul again quotes scripture, Isa 28:16 (LXX) and Joel 3:5 (LXX). To the verse from Isaiah, which Paul quotes more fully at 9:33, Paul adds $\pi\alpha\varsigma$, ("everyone who is faithful [$\pi\alpha\varsigma \delta\epsilon \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega\nu$] will be saved"), mimicking the

Joel quotation in Rom 11:13 (“then *everyone* who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved”).

In these verses, Paul makes free, creative use of the Scriptures, a practice not uncommon for Jewish writers of the time. Tobin points out that Baurch 3:29-30 and Philo in six passages also use the structure of Deut 30:11-14 in a manner similar to Paul.⁴⁴⁴ All three authors “ignore” the original intent of the passage (i.e., claiming that the divine commandments are near at hand) to say that wisdom (in the case of Baruch), the good (for Philo), or the word of faithfulness (for Paul) are near at hand.⁴⁴⁵ Suggs argues that the key to the credibility of Paul’s argument is his reliance on a correspondence between, first, Law and Wisdom (a correspondence used by other Jewish authors as well [e.g., Baruch, Wisd 6:4-9 and a later “rabbinic identification of Wisdom and Torah”]) and a correspondence between Wisdom and Christ that Paul constructed in 1Cor 1:17-24.⁴⁴⁶ With Wisdom as the middle term, Law and Christ perfectly correspond. Supporting Suggs’ conclusion, we have seen a parallel instance in which Paul quotes Deut 30:12, a reference to the Law, and transforms it into quotations about Christ.

In the nine verses 10:5-13, Paul cites five books (Lev, Deut, Psalms, Isaiah, and Joel) with an allusion to a sixth (Hab). This reliance is an inferential pointer to a Jewish audience since there is little evidence that Greek or Latin authors before Paul’s time had

⁴⁴⁴ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 344-45.

⁴⁴⁵ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 345. Dunn documents how Paul’s work here is in line with other interpretive work by Jewish authors. Dunn, *Romans*, 2.603. Suggs cites Baruch as equating Torah and Wisdom, but does not draw the connection with Deut. Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’”, 309.

⁴⁴⁶ Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’”, 306-10.

any knowledge of these texts. The audience that would acknowledge the authoritativeness of these texts is, of course, a Jewish audience. Furthermore, Paul uses these texts in a manner compatible with the way other Jewish authors did, in a manner with which a Jewish audience would be familiar. It appears that in Rom 10 as in Rom 3, Paul countered the citations proposed by his opponents.

In Rom 10:5-13, then, Paul opens with an affirmation of the continuation of the Law expressed in Lev 18:5, but in succeeding verses presents parallel examples of the gracious grant of unmerited salvation to, first, Jews and then to non-Jews. This is an argument of interest only to Jews, using rhetorical devices familiar to Jews, and relying for authority on Jewish Scriptures. Paul is writing to a Jewish audience.

Is This the Same Abraham We Met in Galatia? The Implications of Romans 4

Paul writes extensively about Abraham in two of his letters, Gal and Rom. In Rom, he does so to explain the relationship among Abraham, Jews and non-Jewish Jesus followers. In both letters, Paul's commentary on Abraham assumes the patriarch is an exemplar for the addressees: Abraham represents the attributes defining the Galatian or Roman audiences.⁴⁴⁷ Paul interprets Abraham very differently in the two letters, however,

⁴⁴⁷ Exemplars are particular prototypes. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 178-80. Michael Hogg defines a prototype as "a subjective representation of the defining attributes (beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, etc.) of a social category that is actively constructed and is context dependent. Because common group members generally find themselves relatively similarly placed within the same social field, their prototypes will usually be very similar -- i.e. shared. Prototypes are ordinarily unlikely to be checklists of attributes . . . rather, they are fuzzy-sets that capture the context-dependent features of group membership often in the form of exemplary members (actual group members who best embody the group) or ideal types (an abstraction of group features). Hogg, "Intragroup Processes," 69. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 171-94. In Esler's terminology, which I shall follow, a prototype is not usually a real person while an exemplar is an historical person. Thus King Arthur may be a prototype and Winston Churchill an exemplar for the British. Since Paul undoubtedly considered Abraham a real person, Paul would classify him as an exemplar. Outsiders could consider Abraham a prototype. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 173.

suggesting a difference in audiences. To demonstrate this, I begin with an extended discussion of Paul's use of Abraham in Galatians.

Abraham in Galatians

Paul was instrumental in the formation of the Church in Galatia among non-Judean non-Jews (Gal 4:8-9). He describes the Galatians as former followers of polytheistic traditional religions, using terms similar to those we noted earlier for non-Jews: “. . . not knowing God, you were slaves to those not being gods by nature. . . . how do you revert (ἐπιστρέφω πάλιν) to the weak and impoverished elements? Do you wish to serve them all over again?” (Gal 4:8-9).⁴⁴⁸ These Galatians seem to be tempted by the typically non-Jewish “works of the flesh . . . fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry . . . and the like” (5:19-21). In leaving behind this religion and becoming Jesus followers, these Galatians have undergone “alternation,” not “secondary socialization.”⁴⁴⁹

Hans Dieter Betz argues that after a period of initial enthusiasm the Galatians faced problems “with the flesh” that the theology of Paul's opponents addressed.⁴⁵⁰ Paul

⁴⁴⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 213.

⁴⁴⁹ This conclusion is supported by Paul's use of the verb ἐπιστρέφω in categorizing the move to Torah observance by Jesus followers. Of its 579 appearances, the verb is used in the LXX 408 times to translate שׁוּב. In a religious context, both verbs have the sense of a change of life, either conversion or apostasy depending on the observer's perspective. Georg Bertram, “στρέφω, ἐπιστρέφω,” *TDNT*, vii.722-29. “ἐπιστρέφω” LSJ, 661; M. Graupner and H. J. Fabry “שׁוּב” *TDOT* 461-522. Paul's use at Gal 4:9 with the adverb πάλιν, bears a connotation of apostasy: the individual is turning 180 degrees *again*, returning her to the place whence she began. This may be construed to be tantamount to an equation of the adoption of Torah observance with reversion to the traditional idolatrous religions. On Paul's characterization of the “weak and impoverished elements,” Martyn comments “Shocking is the fact that Paul uses the motif of impotence to characterize observance of the Law on the part of Gentiles.” Martyn, *Galatians*, 411. That is, acceptance of Judaism will not allow the individual to overcome the *akrasia* common to non-Jews.

⁴⁵⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 8. For the basis of the conclusion that the Galatians faced problems with the “flesh,” Betz cites 5:13, 16, 17, 19; 6:12, 13.

accuses these opponents of preaching “another gospel” (1:6-9) “associated with observance of the Jewish Torah and with the ritual of circumcision” (6:12).⁴⁵¹ Probably Paul’s opponents raised the example of Abraham in the context of the need for circumcision. Possibly they cited the covenant of Genesis 17, under which God renewed the promise that Abraham would be the father of many nations (Gen 17:6), enjoined circumcision on Abraham and his descendants (v.10), and promised that Sarah would bear a son (Isaac) (v. 16). Betz continues:

. . . Paul’s opposition had concrete help to offer. According to the opponents’ theology, Christian existence takes place within the terms of the Jewish Torah covenant. Christ is understood as the decisive force opposing evil (“Beliar”) both cosmically and upon earth. As long as they stand firmly in the Torah covenant, the Christians are under the protection of Christ. . . .

Paul’s words suggest that the opponents have urged the Galatians to accept the Torah and circumcision in order to become partakers of the Sinai covenant. Presumably they were told that outside the Torah there is no salvation.⁴⁵²

The Galatians, Betz concludes, have experienced misconduct within the community and are searching for a standard onto which to build their lives. This standard Paul’s opponents offered in “[e]ntering into the Sinai covenant and obedience to the Torah . . . [as] the means to deal with human failure and misconduct in a way which would not endanger their salvation.”⁴⁵³

In contrast to this teaching, Paul’s gospel claims the promises to Abraham benefit the Galatians through Christ’s faithfulness (3:13-14, 29; 5:2). If they follow the teaching

⁴⁵¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 6.

⁴⁵² Betz, *Galatians*, 8-9. Similarly Martyn, *Galatians*, 18.

⁴⁵³ Betz, *Galatians*, 273.

of Paul's opponents and accept circumcision, they must take on the whole law and thereby lose the benefit of Christ (5:2-3).

Here I will describe Paul's use of Abraham in Gal 3-4 *as it might be described by Paul's opponents* to the Roman audience.⁴⁵⁴ This is, as a consequence, a deliberately provocative reading. While this reading is not necessarily in accordance with the best of modern scholarship, I will cite those places where scholars recognize the potential for Paul's words to be thought inflammatory by Jews.

Throughout Galatians 3, Paul emphasizes Genesis 15 because God's promises come *before* Abraham is circumcised and without any apparent *quid pro quo* on Abraham's part. That is, the Abraham of primary importance to Paul is the uncircumcised Abraham who received the promise of being the ancestor of many nations.⁴⁵⁵ Paul analogizes the permanence of the provisions of a last will and testament to the permanence of God's promises: neither the will nor God's promises can be amended once ratified (Gal 3:15). And to whom were God's promises made? Here is Paul's point: the promises were made to Abraham and to his *seed*. Paul daringly interprets "seed" (σπέρμα) as to one person only, namely Christ (Gal 3:16), and through Christ to Jesus

⁴⁵⁴ The clearest evidence that Paul understood that some in Rome opposed his gospel comes in Rom 3:8: "And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), 'Let us do evil so that good may come'? Their condemnation is deserved!" (Romans 3:8 NRS)

⁴⁵⁵ In this, Paul conveniently neglects to mention that Isaac, whom Paul calls the son of the promise, and with whom God promises to establish a covenant (Gen 17:21) is conceived and born (21:1-3) only after Abraham is circumcised (17:23).

followers.⁴⁵⁶ Jews, in this reading, are not the seed of Abraham and Paul decouples all Jews from their exemplar Abraham, a critical element in their social identity.

Paul continues by asserting that the law was transmitted δι' ἀγγέλων, “through angels at the hand of a mediator” and concludes “but the mediator [Moses] is not [a mediator for just] one person, but God is one” [ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνός οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἓς ἔστιν] (Gal 3:20).⁴⁵⁷ First of all, Paul’s statement about the angels could be interpreted to imply that angels, not God, instituted the Law. If the law were not instituted by God, as Moses claimed, then Moses’ credibility is also questioned, and the law becomes a godless creation handed down by an in-credible prophet. Since the law

⁴⁵⁶ Martyn writes of this section “In Galatians, then, election is God’s enactment of his promise in Christ, Abraham’s only seed. It is the act by which God is now creating his church (the new creation, 6:15), not a deed carried out by God either in the time of Abraham or in the time of Moses. If, then, we had only Paul’s letter to the Galatians, *we would have no reason to credit the apostle with a belief in the divine election of the ancient people of Israel. Indeed, precisely the opposite*” (emphasis added). Martyn, *Galatians*, 350. Theodore of Mopsuestia found Christ the sole fulfillment of the promise of a blessing to the nations. Mark J. Edwards ed, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (ACCS; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999), 44. In their commentaries on Galatians, Dunn and Sam Williams both focused on the logic of Paul’s using σπέρμα as a singular noun, though it might ordinarily be considered a collective noun referring to the multiple offspring of one. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1993), 184. Sam K. Williams, *Galatians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 95. In his work on Pauline theology, Dunn recognizes that Paul’s statement here was not his final word on the place and role of Israel after the actions of Jesus Christ. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 724-25.

⁴⁵⁷ As to the angels delivering the law, the LXX renders Deuteronomy 33:2 (a recounting of the giving of the Law): “[Moses] said ‘The LORD came from Sinai and shone forth from Seir on us and he sped from Mount Pharan, with a myriad of holy ones from his right hand; angels with him’” (NRSV). Martyn points to a later “complex tradition in which the incomparable glory of the Law was . . . attested by angelic participation in its genesis,” citing Josephus *Ant.* 15.136; *Jub* 1:29; *T. Dan.* 6:2; Philo *de Somn.* 1.140-144; Acts 7:38, 53; Heb 2:2 *Apoc. Mos.* 1; *Pesiq. R.* 21:7-10. Martyn, *Galatians*, 357.

Betz understands Gal 3:19 to be a shorthand account of Paul’s understanding that the Torah was composed of four elements: (1) it was ordained to control transgressions; (2) would perdure until the offspring, Jesus Christ, should come; (3) was ordained through angels; and (4) came through a mediator. Like Martyn, Betz cites references to the presence of angels at Sinai and does not believe that Paul’s reference here is necessarily meant to be derogatory. Betz, *Galatians*, 163-71.

represented the Jews' national constitution, their *πολίτευμα*, to deny its divine status and the credibility of their law giver was, again, seriously to threaten their social identity.

My interpretation is not that harsh. Paul means that Moses mediated the Law between God and the people of Israel. The fact that a mediator was necessary was not that the contracting party, God, was many but that the recipients, the people of Israel, were many. In contrast to the process of mediation, the promise to Abraham was made directly by God to Abraham without a mediator. This, Paul seems to imply, is a preferred manner of entering a relationship with God. The promise is superior to the Law.⁴⁵⁸

In Gal 4, Paul's allegorical reading of the Hagar and Sarah story (Gen 16) overturns the traditional reading of Genesis by aligning Jews (with no obvious distinction apparent between Jesus followers and non-Jesus-followers), Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem (explicitly and implicitly) with Hagar, Ishmael, the law, and slavery. Non-Jewish Jesus followers, on the other hand, are aligned with Sarah, Isaac, freedom, a heavenly Jerusalem, and the Spirit (Gal 4:21-31). Thus Paul equates Jews with a group of people they would consider "non-Jews," those who engage in idolatry, fornication, and all the other detestable actions of Romans 1:18-32.

The upshot of this reading of Gal 3-4 is that Paul's opponents might have claimed that Paul disparages the Mosaic Law and establishes Abraham as the exemplar and ancestor only of non-Jewish Jesus followers, whether Judean or non-Judean. In their view, Gal 3:27-28 is the logical extension of this argument: Having put on Christ in

⁴⁵⁸ Betz arrives at a similar but not identical understanding of 3:20. Both of us agree that it is a reference which is meant to depict the Law as inferior to the promise. Betz, *Galatians*, 171.

baptism, “There, is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is not male and female, for all you are one in Christ Jesus.” Paul might be construed to be doing two things in this statement. First, he extinguishes the boundaries that help construct a Jewish social identity. Secondly, if Christ Jesus is the sole heir of the promises to Abraham and *only* the baptized are one in him, then all Jews who do not follow Jesus are thereby disenfranchised from the divine promises to Abraham.

Further, Paul’s opponents and all Jews seem now to be classified as no better than idolaters. On this argument, Esler comments

Paul mounts an argument that is more notable for its daring than its persuasiveness and that well illustrates the extent to which collective memories of the past enshrined in prototypes are malleable in the hands of those caught up in a conflict occurring in the present.⁴⁵⁹

An audience composed of Jewish Jesus followers may well have taken umbrage at this, with little taste for assisting its author. As Tobin puts it:

As one reads Paul’s appeal to Abraham . . . one can reasonably argue that his intention was to defend the enfranchisement of Gentile Christians as Gentiles and not to advocate the disinheritance of the Jews. . . . Paul’s use of Abraham in Galatians, however, certainly left him open to the accusation or at least the suspicion that he enfranchised Gentile believers at the expense of disinheriting the Jews. Such a reputation hardly would have endeared Paul to his fellow Jews or to many of his fellow Christians.⁴⁶⁰

J. Louis Martyn opines that Paul learned of the harsh interpretation put on Gal by his opponents there and was determined that in the letter to Rome proper interpretations be put on his teaching. “Seen in this way,” Martyn writes, “parts of

⁴⁵⁹ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 182.

⁴⁶⁰ Thomas H. Tobin, “‘What Shall We Say that Abraham Found?’ The Controversy behind Romans 4,” *HTR* 88, no. 4 (1995): 437-52, here 441-42.

Romans constitute an interpretation of Galatians made by Paul himself.”⁴⁶¹ It may well be that his reputation preceeded his letter. I remarked earlier on Jewett’s observation that “Conservative Jewish Christians would have known him as a radical advocate of the Gentile mission and a chief opponent of the Judaizers. They would have heard of Paul’s harsh encounter with Peter at Antioch”⁴⁶²

Abraham in Romans

My understanding of Paul’s discussion of Abraham in Rom 4 is based, first, on my understanding that this is a continuation of the dialogue begun in Rom 3.⁴⁶³ Further, I have arrived at a translation of Rom 4:1 which establishes a very different theme to the chapter than that of most commentators. These issues I work through while showing the difference between Gal and Rom.

The traditional division of chapters introduces Abraham at 4:1, with a new chapter implying that Paul is introducing a new topic. The context provided by Rom 3:29-31, however, is essential to understanding Romans 4. In these earlier verses, Paul continues his dialogue with the interlocutor:⁴⁶⁴

Paul: “Is God only for Jews, or also for non-Jews?”

⁴⁶¹ Martyn, *Galatians*, 30-34. quotation 34.

⁴⁶² Jewett, *Romans*, 90.

⁴⁶³ Jewett agrees that “the preceding pericope is continued . . . with questions from the interrogator in 4:1, 3, 9, and 10.” Jewett, *Romans*, 305.

⁴⁶⁴ The division of these verses and the ascription of text to Paul and the Interlocutor are taken from Stowers, *Rereading*, 233-34. Dunn acknowledges the “continuity of thought . . . and form” from ch. 3 and considers Abraham a “test case” of the basic theme that “God justifies through faith (so Gentile as well as Jew).” James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.196. Cranfield and Fitzmyer see Abraham as illustrating that no boasting over righteousness may be allowed. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.224-25. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 369.

Interlocutor: “Yes, also for non-Jews.”

Paul: “If indeed God is one who makes righteous the circumcision from faithfulness, God will make righteous the uncircumcised through faithfulness.” (3:29-30)

Paul asserts that the one God of Jews and non-Jews makes righteous all. In the previous chapter, we commented on the perception in antiquity of religion following blood.

According to that logic, if the God of the Jews is also the God of all Jesus followers, then Jews and all Jesus followers are united into one unit – a family, tribe or nation. In contrast, Gal 3:28 separates Jewish-non-Jesus followers from all Jesus followers.

The question of God’s belonging to Jews and non-Jews in Rom 3:29-30 is followed by the interlocutor asking the first of two questions.

Interlocutor: “Are we then declaring the Law null because of faithfulness?”

Paul: “Of course not, we are confirming the Law.” (3:31)

It is therefore within the context of, first, the one God making righteous Jew and non-Jew and, second, faithfulness in upholding the Law that the interlocutor asks a second question, introducing the figure of Abraham. I punctuate and translate Rom 4:1 as follows:

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν εὗρηκεναι Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν; κατὰ σάρκα;

“Why then do we say that we have discovered Abraham [is] our forefather? From human effort?” (4:1).⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁵ Appendix B provides the full explanation for my translation. In contrast with my punctuation, NA²⁷ punctuates with a single question mark after σάρκα. Hays and Stowers put a question mark following ἐροῦμεν and assume that the subject of the infinitive “to have discovered,” is “we” from the finite verb ἐροῦμεν. Hays assumes that Paul is raising a rhetorical question following up the assertion that his gospel of faithfulness supports the Law. Richard B. Hays, “‘Have We Found Abraham to be our Forefather According to the Flesh?’ A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1,” *NT XXVII*, no. 1 (1985): 76-98. Stowers visualizes the question coming from the interlocutor and translates: 4:1-2a “What then will we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather by his own human efforts (that is, according to the flesh)? For if

I engage the translations by other scholars and provide the lexical and grammatical reasoning behind my translation in Appendix B with a summary of other translations in the footnote to the quotation. I would emphasize that other scholars generally argue that the question in 4:1 is how Abraham came to be the forefather of many nations: was it by his human effort (κατὰ σάρκα)? My translation, while not precluding the thrust of the majority translation, suggests that the question *also* involves the Roman audience themselves. Are *they* descendants of Abraham through their own efforts or through Abraham's? In the rest of Rom 4 Paul explains how Abraham became the ancestor and exemplar for all Jesus followers, Jews and non-Jews both. The question in v. 9a ("Is this blessing, then, for [just] the circumcised or also the uncircumcised?"), for example, *assumes* that the blessings of Abraham are inherited by the circumcised and asks whether they are passed on to the uncircumcised as well. In vv. 11-12, Paul adds his claim that Abraham's circumcision is the sign that Abraham is the father of all, circumcised and uncircumcised. I translate these verses as follows:

¹¹And he [Abraham] received the symbol of circumcision as a sign of the righteousness of the faithfulness during the time of [his] uncircumcision, in order that he might be the father of all the faithful while [they are] uncircumcised so that righteousness might be reckoned to them, ¹²and [to be] father to those circumcised, [father] not only as a result of [their] circumcision but also from following in the example of the faithfulness of our father Abraham, while [he was] uncircumcised. (4:11-12)

Abraham was justified by works, he has a reason for boasting." Stowers, *Rereading*, 234. Jewett, with most other commentators, follows the NA²⁷ punctuation with a translation: "Therefore what shall we say that Abraham our forefather found according to flesh?" Jewett agrees with Stowers and against Hays that the interlocutor identified in 2:17 raises the question in 4:1. Jewett, *Romans*, 304, 307.

¹¹καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβεν περιτομῆς σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας, εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι [καὶ] αὐτοῖς [τὴν] δικαιοσύνην, ¹²καὶ πατέρα περιτομῆς τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἰχνεσιν τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ.

It is helpful to underline the earlier observation that in Gal, Abraham was the ancestor and exemplar only for non-Jewish Jesus followers, the uncircumcised. In contrast, in Rom 4:11-12 Abraham is the exemplar for *both* the uncircumcised non-Jews *and all* circumcised Jews.⁴⁶⁶

We can go further: Paul has subtly, but thoroughly, changed his teaching on circumcision. In Rom 4:11, Paul refers to circumcision as a mark of Abraham's previous faithfulness, presumably leaving Haran (Gen 12:1-5), occupying the land of Canaan (12:7), and all his other faithful deeds prior to his circumcision. To assert that Jews follow Abraham in this faithfulness is tantamount to asserting that Roman Jews are circumcised as a sign of their own faithfulness. Circumcision is transformed from a sign of slavery to the elemental spirits (Gal. 4:9), meaning nothing (6:15) to the sign of emulating the faithfulness of Abraham.

What does this say about the implied audience of Rom? Paul has turned key concepts in Gal, most especially the key Jewish boundary marker of circumcision, from a sign of idolatry into a marker of faithfulness to father Abraham. The most elegant explanation explaining the modification in the approach to Abraham in Rom is a change

⁴⁶⁶ On the change in Paul's view of circumcision from Gal to Rom, see J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 102.

Jewett emphasizes the importance of translating ἔθνων as "nations," making Abraham father of Jews and non-Jews. As he shows, a translation of "Gentiles," referring exclusively to non-Jews, would turn the rest of chapter 4 on its head – if not the whole of Romans' argument of the common salvation of all peoples. Jewett, *Romans*, 332.

in audience: from a Galatian audience composed of formerly idolatrous, non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers, to a Roman audience of Jewish Jesus followers.

Paul's affirmation that Abraham is the father of both circumcised and uncircumcised further works to modify the Jewish stereotype of the idolatrous fornicating non-Jew by establishing an element of a common identity for Jews and non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers, namely children of Abraham. To appreciate how Paul accomplishes this requires a brief excursion into the notion of adoption in antiquity and the way that Paul understands adoption working for both Jews and non-Judean Jesus followers.

Adoption was a critical category for Paul. At Rom 9:4, he enumerates, in a hierarchical order, prerogatives of Israelites: they have "adoption," in which they experience the glory of God, and receive the covenants, the temple ritual, and the promises.⁴⁶⁷ The term links with earlier points in Romans. In ch. 8, Paul describes the benefits accruing from the adoption of the faithful in baptism (8:15, 23); as we have just

⁴⁶⁷ I translate the term υἱοθεσία "adoption." James M. Scott argued strongly for this translation as it fits best the lexical meaning. James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992). Brendan Byrne, like Scott emphasizing the Scriptural basis for the term, expresses a need for a wider sense of the term in Paul and so argues for the term "sonship" or "adoptive sonship." Brendan Byrne, "Review of *Adoption as Sons of God. An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus*," *JTS* 44, no. 1 (1993), 288-94. For a synopsis of Byrne's view see his *Romans*, 252. I find Jewett's (*Romans*, 562 n. 99) and Byrne's arguments for a distinction between the "act" of adoption and the consequent "status" of sonship insensitive to the ongoing processes of both adoption and fatherhood. Further, we are here focusing on how Paul would be likely to write to a Roman audience. Since the term υἱοθεσία has very limited literary usage prior to Paul (none in the LXX, none in the NT outside the Pauline corpus (here including Ephesians 1:5), and none in secular literature (per *TLG*), but heavy use epigraphically describing the formation of familial relationships, and since it is likely that Paul is relying on the practice of adoption of heirs to the *imperium* in Rome (so Julius Caesar adopted Octavius, and Claudius adopted Nero) to inform the audience's whole understanding of υἱοθεσία (including the elevation of the one adopted to the status of "son of god"), I hold to the traditional translation of "adoption."

seen, in ch. 4 Paul describes Abraham as the adoptive father of many nations. Outside Romans, the same term appears in Galatians 4:4-5 (“But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, born from a woman, born under [the] Law, so that he might redeem those under [the] Law, in order that we might receive the adoption.”) and with Paul’s citation of a “divine adoption” formula at 2 Corinthians 6:18.

In first century Mediterranean cultures, epigraphical and literary evidence supports the conclusion that adoption was not uncommon.⁴⁶⁸ The most notable adoptions, of course, were those of Octavius, the future Caesar Augustus, by his uncle Julius Caesar and, closer to the time of Rom, the adoption of the teenaged Nero by his uncle and step-father the emperor Claudius. Eisenbaum pointed out that in Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures, a paternal adoption ritual was necessary to bring a child, including a child born to a wife, into the lineage of the father.⁴⁶⁹ The fathers’ deliberate actions gave the children rights of inheritance (see Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29) and the advantages of the family name.⁴⁷⁰

From analyzing the background use of the notion of adoption, both Scott and Byrne concluded that Paul used the term in reference to the promise of Israel’s corporate

⁴⁶⁸ See Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, 3-57.

⁴⁶⁹ Pamela Eisenbaum, “A Remedy for Having been Born of Woman: Jesus, Gentiles, and Genealogy in Romans,” *JBL* 123, no. 4 (2004): 694.

⁴⁷⁰ This was not entirely a one-way relationship. In return for the advantages of adoption, fathers would insure both the continuation of the lineage and (perhaps of more immediate concern) the proper burial rites. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, 3-13.

eschatological redemption.⁴⁷¹ Scott emphasizes 2 Sam 7:14a, the prophet Nathan's oracle of the divine adoption of David's heir: "I will be as a father to him, and he will be as a son to me" tracing its use in *Jubilees* and Paul's quotation in 2 Cor 6:18 ("and I will be to you for a father and you to me as sons and daughters' says the Lord creator of all"). Scott argues that during the first century Nathan's oracle had become associated with an eschatological view of the restoration of Israel in a covenant relationship with God.⁴⁷² Paul's use of the term is similar. In Gal, Paul says that baptized Jesus followers receive adoption (τὴν υἱοθεσίαν) (4:5) when God sent the spirit of God's son into their hearts to cry "Abba, father" (4:6). The eschatological connotation receives more emphasis in Rom 8 where Paul assures the audience that through baptism they possess the spirit of adoption (πνεῦμα οἰθυθεσίας) that allows them to cry "Abba" (v. 15), even while waiting for the redemption of their bodies (v. 23).

Since Abraham is the father, the adoptive father, of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, they are part of the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham to be the father of many nations. In this construct, Paul has pointed out that non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers are descendants of Abraham alongside Jews. There are still many elements of their social identity which are not common between them, but Paul makes this common element salient for his audience here. Jean-Claude Deschamps and Willem Doise describe the process of cross categorization in which a member of an ingroup is

⁴⁷¹ A summary of Byrne's conclusions may be found at Brendan Byrne, "Sons of God" -- "Seed of Abraham." *A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 216-33. Summary of Scott's conclusions: Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, 267-70.

⁴⁷² Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, 114-17.

made aware of certain common features with a person normally included in the outgroup (e.g., a woman recognizes that a man shares a common religion).⁴⁷³ They describe cross categorization as

. . . situations in which there exists for each individual a dichotomy between his membership category and another category, according to one categorization; but this first categorization, instead of overlapping completely with another one, cuts across the individual's membership category in a second system of categorizations in which another dichotomy is used. This is a *crossed categorization*: some people who belong to the individual's membership category and some of those who belong to the other category according to the first categorization are grouped together in the category to which he belongs according to the second categorization which cuts across the first.⁴⁷⁴

Paul's proposal of a common fatherhood of Abraham creates a cross categorization between Jews and non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, through the category of descendants of Abraham. Deschamps and Doise reported the results of experiments in which cross categorization was introduced and concluded that “. . . [t]he introduction of common memberships [e.g., descendant of Abraham], or an increase in their salience, reduces intergroup discrimination in a way which is consistent with the general model of categorical differentiation.”⁴⁷⁵

The effect of Paul's construction of this cross category should be to reduce the negative impact of the stereotype of non-Judean non-Jews which Paul used in Rom 1.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ Dechamps and Doise, “Crossed Category Memberships,” 141-58.

⁴⁷⁴ Dechamps and Doise, “Crossed Category Memberships,” 144.

⁴⁷⁵ Dechamps and Doise, “Crossed Category Memberships,” 158.

⁴⁷⁶ Paul pursues a similar course in Rom 6, when baptism becomes another means of creating cross-categorization, this time between Jewish Jesus' followers and non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus' followers.

Marilyn Brewer described a process which may be taken as a special case of cross categorization, recategorization in favor of a common identity group. In this process, “intergroup bias and conflict can be

Here too, we might conclude, Paul is pursuing a rhetorical strategy which would appeal only to Jews, those in the category of descendant of Abraham “according to the flesh.”

From the argument of Gal Paul has changed the role of Abraham from one who divides Jews and non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers to the common ancestor and exemplar for Jews and Jesus followers. The religion of Israel has transformed from being equivalent to reversion to idolatry to a cogent parallel with Paul’s own gospel.

What has prompted these changes? I assert that that the most elegant answer – the simplest answer that explains the data – is that the change in the audience, from a previously pagan audience in Galatia to a Roman audience composed of Jewish Jesus followers, accounts for this change. To summarize my earlier comments, Galatians 4:8-9 shows the prior religious identity of the audience to have been formed by traditional, polytheistic religions. For them, the move to following Jesus clearly represented an alternation, a fundamental reordering of their identity. Paul claimed that a move to Torah observance would be a reversion to idolatry. To make the latter connection credible, Paul recast the figure of Abraham, rendering the Jewish exemplar into an ancestor exclusively

reduced by factors that transform participants’ representations of memberships from two groups to one more inclusive group. With common ingroup identity, the cognitive and motivational processes that initially produced ingroup favoritism are redirected to benefit the former outgroup members.” Brewer, “Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations”, 695-715, here 07. Also Samuel L. Gaertner, et al., “Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Benefits of Recategorization,” in *Intergroup Relations: Essential Readings* (eds. M. A. Hogg and D. Abrams; Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2001), 356-69. In the case of Rom, this would consider the category “descendant of Abraham” as a single category superior to the identity of both “Jewish” and “non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus follower.” The theory may have some explanatory power, but certain of the conditions for its use do not appear to be present in the case of Rom, particularly the ability of both groups to interact directly. Walter G. Stephan’s summary of the work on recategorization suggests the need for face-to-face work for this process to be effective. Walter G. Stephan, “The Road to Reconciliation,” in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Reconciliation* (eds. A. Nadler, et al.; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 369-94, here 84. In addition, the group “descendants of Abraham” appears to Paul to be an extremely salient identity for Jews, almost to define “Jewishness.” It is therefore not a group into which Jews could “rise.”

of Jesus followers. Paul's position in Gal is especially polemical since, if Abraham, the first great monotheist, is not the ancestor of the Jews, their religious identity becomes suspect.

Now in Rom Paul is addressing a different group, not former pagans in Galatia, but Jesus followers in Rome, whose assistance he seeks. Rather than claim that Jews are descendants of Hagar and Ishmael and Jesus followers descendants of Sarah and Isaac, Paul emphasizes that Jews and Jesus followers are one family under Abraham. Abraham is the father of those, both circumcised and uncircumcised, who follow him in the faithfulness he displayed to the one God while he was uncircumcised. Rather than imply that circumcision is an act of submission to the pagan elements, Paul refers to circumcision as the mark of Jewish faithfulness. Rather than cast Abraham as the exemplar of Jesus followers alone, Abraham is now the common exemplar of Jews and Jesus followers. And as we shall see, rather than being "fools" (Gal. 3:1, 3), the Romans are "those who know the Law" (Rom. 7:1). These comparisons of Gal and Rom were confirmed by Beker who concluded that

Romans 4 allows for the continuity of salvation-history [from Abraham to Christ], whereas Galatians 3 focuses on discontinuity. . . [as Christ] inserts himself as a discontinuous reality in a salvation-history that after Abraham was dominated by the prison of the law.⁴⁷⁷

The narratives of Rom and Gal speak respectively of alternation and secondary socialization, of prior religious histories of idolatrous polytheists and Jews respectively.

⁴⁷⁷ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 99.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

The goal for this chapter has been to show that Paul's implied audience for Rom is composed of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. My analysis in this chapter has been based on the premise that while seeking the Romans' assistance for his mission Paul would make an effort to ingratiate himself with the audience and address any concerns which his opponents may have raised.

The chapter is devoted to an analysis of the ways and means of Paul's letter, seeking out clues as to the implied audience. Once Paul's own religious identity as a Jew was established, I analyzed Paul's references to the audience, showing how these references point to an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. That Paul, a Judean Jewish Jesus follower, used inclusive personal pronouns and the ingroup designation Ἰσραήλ indicates that Paul was seeking to establish a common Jewish identity with the audience. This conclusion is reinforced by Paul's use of the Jewish stereotype of the idolatrous, fornicating non-Judean non-Jew in Rom 1 and his subsequent efforts to mitigate the negative prejudice behind this stereotype towards his own congregations.

Throughout Rom, Paul uses the Jewish Scriptures in a particularly Jewish way. Most notable is the appearance of Abraham in Rom as a sign of unity between Jews and non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. This use both contrasts sharply with Paul's references to Abraham in Gal and provides a cross category for Jewish Jesus followers to adopt vis-à-vis Paul's Eastern congregations of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers.

In numerous ways, then, I have demonstrated that Paul's implied audience is composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

In opening and closing chapter 2, I referred to A. J. M. Wedderburn's three criteria for reconstruction of a plausible audience for Romans: the proposed situation of the audience is inherently plausible; the reconstruction fits what is known of other communities of Jesus followers; and "it fit[s] with what Paul's text says."⁴⁷⁸ In chapter 2, I demonstrated, first, that an audience composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers is consistent with an historical reconstruction of the first Roman community of Jesus followers and, second, that such an audience is also consistent with what can be known of other early communities of Jesus followers, thus satisfying Wedderburn's first two criteria. This chapter then provides the third and final piece in meeting Wedderburn's criteria for a plausible reconstruction of the audience: Paul's implied audience is composed of non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers.

The next chapter, discussing Paul's position on the Law in Rom, both confirms this audience – Paul writes about the Law as to non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers – and provides one payoff for viewing the audience in this way. When we realize that Paul is writing to a community so composed, a community he has never met but from whom he wishes to receive certain benefits, then one would expect that he will discuss the Law in a non-confrontational, Law-sympathetic – perhaps even affirming – manner. In the next chapter I will show how Paul's discussion of the Law fits that expectation.

⁴⁷⁸ Wedderburn, *Reasons for Romans*, 64.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE LAW IN ROMANS

Introduction

Paul's teaching on the relationship of Jesus followers to the Law has been a matter of contention for centuries. Jouette Bassler notes "No aspect of Paul's thought is as hotly disputed as his view of the law."⁴⁷⁹ In an earlier chapter, I explained why it is correct to call Paul a Jew. Part of being a Jew is observing the Law. While in that discussion I avoided discussion of the Law, the evidence presented then supports an assumption that Paul, as a Jew, was observant of the Law. Paul's discussion of the Law in Gal, however, seems to contradict that conclusion. There, Paul claims, among other things, that the Law came from angels, not God (Gal 3:19) and that if the Galatians are circumcised in accordance with the Law (as Paul's opponents teach), they have lost the benefit of Christ (5:2). In Rom, on the other hand, Paul claims that circumcision has value (Rom 3:1-2) and that his gospel "affirms the Law" (3:31). Can Paul's teachings be reconciled? If they are incompatible, is Paul simply inconsistent, both between and within letters? Did Paul's teaching on the subject change over time?

Beyond the question of Paul's intellectual consistency, these questions have implication for contemporary Jewish-Christian relations. Rephrasing them slightly, does Paul teach that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection resulted in the annulment of the Jewish

⁴⁷⁹ Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 11.

Law for all people and for all time? If so, then the covenant between God and Jews has been annulled, Judaism is built on false premises, and modern Jews follow a false religion. With the post-World War II realization that just such Christian supersessionism contributed to the Shoa, the study and consequential debate on Paul's understanding of how Jesus followers related to the Law has taken on greater urgency, and poignancy.⁴⁸⁰

How can my interpretation of Rom as a letter requesting help from a community of non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers bring light to these questions? Framing the question in this way helps point to one solution: we would expect Paul a petitioner to write as not to offend his audiences' sensibilities by denying the efficacy of the Law. If Paul writes one way to the Galatians and another to the Romans, this could mean simply that Paul changed his teaching simply to please different audiences, substituting a charge of duplicity for inconsistency.

In this chapter, taking account of the implied audience for Rom, I arrive at a way to read Rom with Paul's other writings on the Law, particularly Gal, as being consistent both across Paul's writings and with a Jewish understanding of the Law. In Rom, Paul honors the Law in the lives of the Roman non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers and demonstrates that his "law free" gospel is consistent with the Jewish understanding of the relationship of non-Jews to the Law. The Law will continue to be operative, in all the ways that the Law has always been operative, for Jews and non-Jews. My objective is to

⁴⁸⁰ Lloyd Gaston observed " . . . I write in the context of the second half of the twentieth century in the firm conviction that things which happened in the first half must mean a radical and irrevocable change in the way Christians do theology." Gaston continues to note that while he expected to find anti-Judaism in Paul, his scholarly efforts led to a different conclusion. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 2.

advance this understanding of Rom as a text treating the Law positively and respectfully, a treatment of the Law consistent with an implied audience composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers and corroborating my construction of that audience.

When I argue that Paul supported the Law, I do not mean that he necessarily believed that the Law applies to all people in an identical manner. On the contrary, provisions of the Law are not the same for Jews and non-Jews. The provisions of God's second covenant with Abraham when Abraham became a Jew (Gen 17:1 ff.), and the subsequent covenant at Sinai included commandments such as circumcision, dietary restrictions, Sabbath observance, and temple sacrifice. These provisions define the Jew, the person living within those covenants. Other provisions apply equally to Jews and to non-Jews, the commandments to Adam and Eve and to Noah and his family, narratives that explain how the world came to be as it is (creation narratives, genealogies), and the promise to Abraham to be a father of many nations. All of these help define the triangular relationship among "Jews, Greeks," and the God of Israel. All of it is "Law" under which Jews and non-Jews live.

To be sure, the issue of Paul and the Law is huge and inevitably draws on other topics.⁴⁸¹ For my project, the discussion can be narrowed to the question of the relationship of the Law to Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers. I have shown that Paul focuses his attention throughout Rom on the question of the relationship between these

⁴⁸¹ Veronica Koperski has produced a helpful summary of the state of the question through the end of the last century. The fact that 148 pages are necessary for even a summary presentation indicates the enormity of trying to understand the full range of the subject. Veronica Koperski, *What are They Saying about Paul and the Law?* (WATSA; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001).

groups, as for example in his use and modification of stereotypes of non-Jews, and his discussion of Abraham.⁴⁸² I begin this chapter with a summary of the principal scholarly positions on the question of Paul's understanding of the relationship of Law and non-Jewish and Jewish Jesus followers. It is my objective in this section to provide a concise picture of the landscape of current state of scholarship.

Following the survey of scholarship, I consider what the connotations of "law" might have been to ancient people. I have found that, contrary to a modern American's sensibility, whose individualism and national myth make the notion of "law" almost allergenic, ancient Jews, Greeks, and Romans all had a positive attitude toward law. For the ancient Greeks, to be "under the law" was to be civilized. As part of this section, I will demonstrate that Paul's conception of Law included much more than just the legal materials in the Pentateuch, but narratives and genealogical material there as well as other texts from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Having established Paul's and his audience's understanding of law in general, I will show how Paul and other Second Temple Jewish writers believed that non-Jews were subject to the Law. Among other provisions of the Law, I will show that Paul looked to the coming of the nations to the worship of the God of Israel. To fulfill that prophecy, non-Jews were required to come to the worship of the God of Israel *as non-Jews*. In writing to the Galatians, therefore, Paul wrote angrily against those who would

⁴⁸² As should become clearer in the subsequent discussion, I have concluded that Paul held a "two-way theory of salvation." Paul believed that Christ is to non-Jews as the full provisions of the Law are to Jews, that Christ brought non-Judean non-Jews into the family of Abraham (Rom 4) for their "salvation" *precisely as non-Judean non-Jewish* Jesus followers. Jews, Paul believed, have the full Law including the temple cult by which to achieve "salvation."

have converted the Galatians to Judaism by accepting all features of the Law: they were meant to come to worship the God of Israel through Jesus Christ as non-Jews. In contrast, when writing to a Jewish audience in Rome, Paul's discussion of the Law is entirely more positive, for the Law is still operative in the life of Jewish Jesus followers, Judean and non-Judean both.

To demonstrate that, I analyze, first, Rom 6-8. In ch. 7, Paul explains that the Law works in the lives of all people but that it is not possible for non-Jews who do not follow Jesus to follow its provisions. Paul argues that baptism has repaired the nature of the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers in his communities. The second analysis concerns Rom 9:1-10:4 and concludes that for Paul Christ is the goal or point of the Law as concerns the redemption of non-Judean non-Jews. In Christ, God's righteousness towards these people is revealed.

The Landscape of Current Scholarship

As to scholars whom I will address, my principal interest is in those who are most helpful in delineating the contours of my argument. This would be a disparate collection, composed of those who disagree with my position as well as those (few) who generally agree with them. I have included a summary of the conclusions of three of the former – E. P. Sanders, Charles E. B. Cranfield, and James D. G. Dunn – providing in each case my reasons for rejecting their views. I have attempted to select a range of dialogue partners for this section. Sanders, especially since the publication of his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, has been an influential figure in the discussion of Paul and Second Temple Judaism and his work deserves special attention. Cranfield's arguments on Law

and legalism provide one way to mitigate the apparent harshness of Paul's criticism of the Law in Gal and elsewhere. Dunn's work on Paul and the Law in general, and Rom in particular has established him as one of the preeminent Pauline scholars with highly influential views throughout the English language world. My plan is to first summarize the major points of each concerning the Law and to immediately offer my critique of their positions.

I repeat the process with three scholars with whom I recognize an affinity, Krister Stendahl, Lloyd Gaston, and John Gager, with a variation. As I read Sanders, Cranfield, and Dunn, they have distinctly different views, but the views of Stendahl, Gaston, and Gager form, together, a more uniform, compatible stream of scholarship. Therefore, while I treat each of the first three in separate sections, I discuss the latter three in one.

E. P. Sanders: Paul Works from Solution to Plight

In an earlier chapter, I explained why I believe that Sanders views Paul as "anti-Jewish." The basis for that conclusion is largely Sanders' understanding of Paul's teaching about the Law. One of the reasons Sanders wrote *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* was "to establish a different view of Rabbinic Judaism," namely the structure of "covenantal nomism."⁴⁸³ In the second part of *PPJ*, Sanders set out his understanding of Paul's soteriology in his letters. He concluded that Paul rejected the saving efficacy of the

⁴⁸³ The "pattern" or "structure" of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group that will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 422.

Abrahamic or Sinai covenant *even for Jews*, and instead believed that “God has sent Christ to be saviour of all, both Jew and Gentile”⁴⁸⁴ In a later work, Sanders discussed Paul’s view of the Law in Rom:

Thus, the main line of Paul’s argument is that God always intended to save by faith, apart from law. God gave the law, but he gave it in order that it would condemn all and thus prepare negatively for redemption on the basis of faith (3:22, 24, the purpose clauses conveying God’s intention). The law was not given to make alive (3:21).

One of the most striking features of Paul’s argument is that he puts everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, in the same situation. This is best explained by hypothesizing that he thought backwards, from solution to plight, and that his thinking in this, as in many respects, was governed by the overriding conviction that salvation is through Christ.⁴⁸⁵

As Sanders saw it, Paul believed that God’s eternal plan was that the Jewish Law would constitute a temporary arrangement. Non-Jews were always able to secure eternal life “through faith,” just as the whole world – including Jews – now were to receive eternal life through faith in Christ.⁴⁸⁶ On this point Sanders concludes:

What is wrong with the law, and thus with Judaism [in Paul’s mind], is that it does not provide for God’s ultimate purpose, that of saving the entire world through faith in Christ, and without the privilege accorded to Jews through the promises, the covenants, and the law.⁴⁸⁷

As to his work on Rom, Sanders writes that the letter was written to address Paul’s situation, not that of the Romans:

⁴⁸⁴ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 548.

⁴⁸⁵ Sanders, *PLJP*, 4, 68. On the movement of Paul from “solution to plight,” Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 548.

⁴⁸⁶ Sanders, *PLJP*, 46-47.

⁴⁸⁷ Sanders, *PLJP*, 47. Again, “In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity.*” Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 552 italics in original.

It seems best, however, to view Romans as being Paul's reflection on the problem of Jew and Gentile in the light of his past difficulty in Galatia and the coming encounter in Jerusalem. He is concerned that the Romans may have heard that his position on the law leads to antinomianism, or even that he himself is antinomian (Rom. 6:1, 15; cf. 3:8). He doubtless wanted to clarify his position on the law in view of his impending visit . . .⁴⁸⁸

As do I, Sanders believes Paul is writing to secure the support of the Roman community.

Our difference begins with our understanding why Paul's writing in Gal may have created the impression that he is antinomian and why he would wish to counter that in Rom. In my reading, I am explicit, first of all, in considering that the purposes and audiences in Galatians and Rome are very different, and then in showing how they differ: Paul wrote in Gal to an audience of non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers whom he wishes to convince to remain non-Jewish, but in Rom to non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers seeking their support for his mission. Sanders makes no explicit distinction concerning the religious history of Paul's audiences, thus apparently assuming that they are identical. If that were the case, if both audiences are non-Jewish Jesus followers (as I read the Galatians to be), it is difficult to understand why Paul needs to refute the charges of antinomianism in Rom. On the other hand, an audience of Jewish Jesus followers in Galatians would already have been circumcised, making Paul's argument there moot (and his anger jejune). Even taking Sanders on his own terms, if Paul is writing to *counter* a perception of antinomianism, should not Paul's denial of antinomianism – in effect, his support for the Law – be factored into a reading of Rom? Where or how does Paul do

⁴⁸⁸ Sanders, *PLJP*, 31.

this? Everything Sanders writes implies that indeed Paul *is* antinomian in the way an observant Jew would understand the term.

Sanders' interpretation of Pauline antinomianism is shown in his discussion of Rom 2 and 3. Romans 2, with its implication that salvation is dependent on observing the Law – or that one may be justified by observing the Law (for example, “for it is not hearers of the Law [who are] righteous before God, but doers of the Law who will be found justified [δικαιωθήσονται]” Rom 2:13) – is a stumbling block for Sanders' thesis. Recognizing this, Sanders treats 1:18-2:29 in an appendix in *PLJP*, claiming that it is entirely inconsistent with the rest of the letter, which holds that both Jews and Greeks are justified by “faith.”⁴⁸⁹ The fact that Sanders must delete Rom 1:18-2:29 from his analysis is an obvious weakness in his argument. In contrast, my interpretation of the purpose and audience for Rom permits me to integrate Rom 1:18-2:29 with the remainder of the letter: Paul describes the Jewish stereotype of non-Jewish humanity (1:19-32) but there is actually nothing to indicate that the entirety of non-Jews must be included in the condemnation. Therefore, Paul is able to acknowledge the possibility that both Jews, and non-Jews who are not idolators, are able to follow the Law (2:12-16, 26).

When Sanders discusses Rom 3, he claims that Paul teaches the necessity of πίστις Χριστοῦ, “the faithfulness of Christ,” for all, both non-Jew and Jew.⁴⁹⁰ This reading ignores the overwhelming thrust of the opening of ch. 3 as affirming God's

⁴⁸⁹ Sanders, *PLJP*, 123-35. “I think that in Rom. 1:18-2:29 Paul takes over to an unusual degree homiletical material from Diaspora Judaism, that he alters it in only insubstantial ways, and that consequently the treatment of the law in chapter 2 cannot be harmonized with any of the diverse things which Paul says about the law elsewhere.” Sanders, *PLJP*, 123.

⁴⁹⁰ Sanders, *PLJP*, 33-35.

continuing commitment to the Law and its continuing efficacy (3:1-8). Paul follows this affirmation with the catena in 3:10-18. I previously discussed the high probability that this catena was used first by Paul's detractors and now is turned against them to demonstrate that all, Jews and Greeks are liable to sin. That fact alone, however, is not evidence that Paul believes that the covenant between God and Israel has been dislodged. As Sanders himself demonstrated, Jews saw the covenant between God and Israel as the basic action that makes a Jew righteous; following the prescriptions of the Law keeps a Jew within the covenant and in right relationship with God.⁴⁹¹ Thus, in line with the developing thought of Judaism, Paul affirms in Rom 3 that God has maintained the covenant and subsequently that the people of the covenant must pursue righteousness within it. Contrary to Sanders, nothing here says that Paul is nullifying the Law. Paul does not say that the faithfulness of Christ has replaced the covenant for the Jews.

Now, having affirmed the continuation of the covenant with Israel, Paul turns in 3:21-30 to the status of non-Jews. This is signaled in 3:21 with the phrase *νυνὶ δὲ ἔξω νόμου*, "So now apart from the Law," that I paraphrase "On the other hand, outside of the covenant between God and Israel."⁴⁹² Paul here signals that the remainder of chapter 3 treats not of "all," as Sanders claims, but all who are outside the covenant, all non-Jews, and goes on to describe how the faithfulness of Christ has resulted in their salvation, as Sanders quotes in 3:22-24. Thus, in chapter 3 Paul affirms first the faithfulness of God to

⁴⁹¹ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 86-87.

⁴⁹² See Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 249.

the ongoing covenant with Israel and then the faithfulness of Christ that brings “salvation” to those outside the covenant.

C. E.B. Cranfield: Paul Rejects Jewish Legalism

Cranfield’s commentary on Rom was published two years before Sanders’ *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* and reads as part of an effort to avoid a derogatory interpretation of Judaism itself. In it, Cranfield reads Paul as condemning the “legalism” of first century Judaism. In Rom 7, when Paul’s interlocutor implies that because of the Law sin multiplies, (v. 13), Paul means that “*In particular, the law makes sin more, in that it establishes the possibility of legalism.*”⁴⁹³ “Legalism” Cranfield understands to be “a means by which to establish a claim upon God and so to assert a measure of independence over against Him.”⁴⁹⁴ Because the Greek language of Paul’s day included no word-group corresponding to the English “legalism,” “we should always . . . be ready to reckon with the possibility that Pauline statements, which at first sight seem to disparage the law, were really directed not against the law itself but against that misunderstanding and misuse of it for which we now have a convenient terminology.”⁴⁹⁵ Elsewhere (on Rom 7:6) Cranfield writes:

That Paul is not opposing the law as such and in itself to the Spirit is clear, since only a few verses later he affirms that the law is “spiritual” (v. 14). He does not

⁴⁹³ Cranfield, *Romans*, 847.

⁴⁹⁴ Cranfield, *Romans*, 847. It should be clearly understood that Cranfield’s definition of “legalism” goes well beyond the understanding of the term in contemporary English. The *OAD* defines “legalism” as “strict, literal, and often excessive adherence to the law.” *OAD*, “legalism,” 506. Cranfield’s definition, with its sense of manipulating the divinity, is more closely aligned with “magic:” “the supposed art of controlling events or effects etc. by supernatural power.” *OAD*, “magic,” 533.

⁴⁹⁵ Cranfield, *Romans*, 853.

use “letter” as a simple equivalent of “the law.” “Letter” is rather what the legalist is left with as a result of his misunderstanding and misuse of the law. It is the letter of the law in separation from the Spirit.⁴⁹⁶

One concludes that Cranfield finds “legalism” the defining feature of first century Judaism for Paul. Heikki Räisänen observed that every time Paul appears to be speaking critically of the law, Cranfield interprets it as a criticism of legalism.⁴⁹⁷ Cranfield saw Christ superseding the value of the Law, particularly the provisions for circumcision and dietary restrictions. For those Jews who did not believe Jesus was Messiah

. . . to regard these things [“circumcision and other ceremonies of the law”] as possessed of an independent value in themselves quite apart from Him is to be left with a mere empty ‘shadow’ of isolation from ‘the body’ that gives it meaning (cf. Col 2.16f).⁴⁹⁸

I do not argue with the perception that Paul stood foursquare against what moderns refer to as “legalism.” If Paul characterized first century (and, equally, contemporary) Judaism as a “shadow,” however, he would go beyond merely decrying legalism to denying the validity of Judaism as a religion. In contrast, I understand Paul to be speaking of his ministry to non-Jews when in Gal he urges avoidance of circumcision. In contrast to that, at Rom 2:25 Paul echoes Gal 5:3 as he affirms the value of circumcision as long as the whole law is maintained.⁴⁹⁹ At Rom 3:1-8, Paul reaffirms the value of circumcision and of Judaism, not denying the fact that *some* Jews have been

⁴⁹⁶ Cranfield, *Romans*, 339-40.

⁴⁹⁷ Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 42.

⁴⁹⁸ Cranfield, *Romans*, 851.

⁴⁹⁹ Rom 2:25: “Circumcision is indeed of value as long as you obey the Law; but if you are a law breaker, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.” Gal 5:3 “Again, I attest that everyone who is circumcised is obligated to obey the whole law.”

unfaithful. At 2:27-29, Paul echoes the Hebrew prophets who decried “legalism” among their cohorts and demanded a change in heart. But there is no question that the call to greater fervor and care for the oppressed was seen by the prophets and similarly by Paul as being within the Law, in fact, in emphasizing the precepts of the Law.

James D. G. Dunn: Paul Rejects Jewish Exclusivism

James Dunn has written extensively on Paul and the Law. He summarizes how Paul would characterize the Law in six ways:

1. defining sin;
2. protecting and disciplining “Israel from Moses to Christ . . . a temporary role. It should not be assumed, however, that this is the only function of the law and therefore that the coming of Christ means the abolition of the law”;
3. Israel’s continuing adherence to the law means that Israel is now “behind the times”;
4. maintaining Israel’s status in the covenant;
5. being used by sin to “entrap the human weakness of the flesh”; and
6. serving “as the ally of the powers of sin and death . . . not . . . as itself a cosmic power.”⁵⁰⁰

In addition to these points, Dunn performed an important task in his exegesis of the phrase ἔργα νομῶν, “works of the law.” Its appearance only in Paul (and then only in Rom and Gal) and in the sectarian Qumran texts led Dunn to conclude that it refers to those practices that distinguish one sect, one religion, or one people from another.⁵⁰¹ Dunn concludes in his 1992 article, that Paul’s negative comments on works of the law

⁵⁰⁰ Dunn, *Theology*, 159-61.

⁵⁰¹ James D. G. Dunn, “Yet Once More--‘The Works of the Law’ : A Response,” *JSNT* 46(1992): 99-117, here 103-04. Dunn, *Theology*, 354-59.

referred to a Jewish attitude of superiority.⁵⁰² Dunn argues that in Rom 3:28-29 Paul condemns the “affirmation of justification by works . . . [that is] tantamount to saying ‘God is God of Jews only.’ ‘Works of the law’ are what distinguish Jew from Gentile.”⁵⁰³

Dunn ends his analysis with the following summary:

[T]he “works” which Paul consistently warns against were, in his view, Israel’s misunderstanding of what her covenant law required. That misunderstanding focused most sharply on Jewish attempts to maintain their covenant distinctiveness from [non-Jews] . . . and on [Jewish Jesus followers’] . . . attempts to require . . . [non-Jewish Jesus followers] to adopt such covenant distinctives. Furthermore, that misunderstanding meant a misunderstanding of God and of God’s promised (covenanted) intention to bless also the nations.⁵⁰⁴

My first point of departure with Dunn’s reading is his perception that the Law’s role as disciplinarian for Israel was a temporary, divine expedient “until Christ came.”⁵⁰⁵

While Dunn admits that Paul does not claim that the Law has been abolished, I would add that there is also nowhere in Rom that Paul asserts that *even one* of the Law’s functions Dunn outlined, has been superseded or rendered obsolete by Christ.⁵⁰⁶ In fact, in Gal, Paul’s acceptance of the gospel Peter will preach to the “circumcised” (Gal 2:9) implies maintenance of the “works of the law” on their part – else why the two “gospels”?

⁵⁰² Dunn, “Yet Once More,” 109.

⁵⁰³ Dunn, *Theology*, 363.

⁵⁰⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 366.

⁵⁰⁵ Dunn, *Theology*, 160.

⁵⁰⁶ Dunn, *Theology*, 160.

If Dunn's criticisms of "Jewish exclusiveness" are correct, they represent a serious indictment of Jews. Dunn is in fact saying that Jews deny that the Law and the prophets promised the fulfillment of the covenant between God and Abraham that provided that Abraham would be the father of many nations, gathered under the one God of Israel. Jews of Paul's acquaintance who denied that this had occurred in the person of Christ were, in Paul's eyes, guilty of transgressing the Law because "their hearts had been hardened" (Rom 9:18).

Throughout his writing Dunn follows Sanders in recognizing that first century Jews did not believe that "works of the law" established them within the covenant, but that they maintained their position in the covenant through "works of the law" (a distinction between "getting in" [achieved through an unmerited divine call into covenant] and "staying in" [through works of the law]).⁵⁰⁷ While theoretically recognizing this distinction, Dunn ignores it in the cases cited: works of the Law will not lead to the justification of a non-Jew by themselves, *just as they do not result in the inclusion of a Jew into the covenant*. As works of the Law are about status maintenance, the initial status within the family of God, of being adopted children of God, through membership in the family of Abraham, must be established through some other mechanism. For Jews that mechanism is being born as a descendant *in the flesh* of Abraham (and, for a male, taking on the covenant through circumcision). For non-Jewish Jesus followers, the Christ event provides that status: "for we consider that a person is put into a right relationship with God by faithfulness [of Christ] apart from works of the law"

⁵⁰⁷ Dunn, "Yet Once More," 109.

(3:28). That Paul is referring to non-Jews is made clear in the next verse when Paul asks “Or is God only for Jews and not of non-Jews?” and responds “Yes, also of non-Jews.”

The general view that Paul viewed the Law – and Jewish practices of the Law – as exclusionary or legalistic – has been subject to fresh criticism. A growing body of scholars have built on Sanders’ configuration of first century Judaism as holding that Jews saw the covenant as the entry point for righteousness and the Law as the means for maintaining a covenantal relationship. When this view is attributed to Paul, one can then see why Stendahl *et al.* see Paul addressing the question of how non-Judean, non-Jews who are not in the covenant are to enter and maintain a right relationship with the God of Israel. As the apostle to these people, it would naturally be a matter of concern to Paul.

Krister Stendahl, Lloyd Gaston, and John Gage:

Paul’s Concern was Mission to Non-Judean, Non-Jews

Krister Stendahl’s seminal contribution has been to provoke a new paradigm of Paul as a writer and Rom as a letter dealing with relations between Jews and non-Judean non-Jews.⁵⁰⁸ In this, Stendahl claims to reach back to the first 350 years after Paul wrote, the time preceeding Augustine. During those years, Stendahl notes,

. . .the Church was by and large under the impression that Paul dealt with those issues with which he actually deals: 1) What happens to the Law (the Torah, the actual Law of Moses, or the principle of legalism) when the Messiah comes? What are the ramifications of the Messiah’s arrival for the relation between Jews and Gentiles?⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ “Today, when many others have finally caught up with Stendahl’s initiatives, it is difficult to appreciate just how innovative his original insights were almost forty years ago. In many ways, and with only slight exaggeration, it can be said that subsequent efforts amount to little more than a series of footnotes to his pioneering work.” John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 45.

⁵⁰⁹ Stendahl, “Paul and the Introspective Conscience”, 84.

Stendahl refers to Rom as “Paul’s final account of his theology of mission. . . . Romans is a tractate on mission, not just in terms of outreach, but in terms of how Paul’s bringing the message to the Gentiles fits into God’s total plan.”⁵¹⁰

Adopting this basic stance towards Paul and Rom, Lloyd Gaston asserts that Paul’s “central theological concern is . . . the legitimacy of including Gentiles at this time as full-fledged members of the people of God.”⁵¹¹ That concern required considering the relationship, first of all, of non-Judean, non-Jews who did *not* follow Jesus. What would be their status? Paul, says Gaston, responded that such were “under the Law,” subject to their provisions, whether they recognized this or not.⁵¹² Those who maintained a relationship with the “Creator God” and followed the commandments for non-Judean, non-Jews would be called “righteous Gentiles.”⁵¹³ Following from this is the conclusion that righteousness by works of the law is not a doctrine of Judaism.

As to works of the Law, in *Paul and Torah*, written before Dunn’s pronouncements on the subject, Gaston proposed that Paul’s negative language regarding works of the law came only in reference to their imposition on, or adoption by, “Gentiles.”⁵¹⁴ In this, Gaston followed M. Barth who claimed in 1974 that “The nature of ‘works of law’ (which cannot be defined with the aid of LXX, Qumran, Apocalypticists,

⁵¹⁰ Krister Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), ix, 41.

⁵¹¹ Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 20.

⁵¹² Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 29.

⁵¹³ Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 23.

⁵¹⁴ Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 25.

Tannaites) must be elucidated by the only group of documents in which they are mentioned, the Pauline Epistles . . .”⁵¹⁵ While Dunn’s publication of the appearance of the phrase in the Qumran documents inevitably must lead to some revision in Barth’s work, the thrust of his conclusion, that the only appearances in *Paul* involve the imposition of such commandments on non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers, can not be seriously challenged. Gaston emphasizes that the phrase ἔργα νόμου only appears in letters, Gal and Rom, addressed (as he reads them) only to non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. Hence, Paul’s negative comments are to be considered as applying only to these, supporting Gaston’s claim about the object of Paul’s concern.

John Gager encapsulates much of Gaston’s work in a proposed rule for reading Paul on the law:

Any statement that begins with the words, “How could a Jew like Paul say X, Y, Z about the law,” must be regarded as misguided. In all likelihood Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, is not speaking about the law as it relates to Israel but only about the law and Gentile members of the Jesus-movement.⁵¹⁶

Like Gaston, Gager reads Paul as writing to and about non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. His teachings on the Law are to be understood as directed to the relationship between this audience and the Jewish law; negative comments are to be understood as denying that the Sinai covenant embraces non-Jews, and not an indictment of Jews who follow the Law.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁵ Markus Barth, *Ephesians* (AB 34; 2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 246

⁵¹⁶ Gager, *Reinventing*, 44.

⁵¹⁷ Gager, *Reinventing*, 57-58.

Gager introduces the language of “two ways:” the theory that Paul understood that God had instituted two ways to salvation, one for Jews (the Sinai covenant) and a second for non-Judean non-Jews (the faithfulness of Christ).⁵¹⁸ Gager suggests that Paul foresaw some great but undefined coming together at the end of time but finds no precedents for this sequence of events in ancient Judaism and Paul’s own letters distinctly unclear about all of this.⁵¹⁹ In the end, Gager believes that Paul prophesies “not two peoples of God but one. Jews and Gentiles – humanity in its entirety – form one corporate body.”⁵²⁰

Gaston and Gager are clear that they view the audience of Rom as “Gentiles,” by which I understand them to mean non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. What they do not demonstrate is why this audience needs to be convinced of the matters concerning non-Judean, non-Jews. Nor do they address Paul’s deployment in Romans of the stereotype of the idolatrous, fornicating non-Jew, surely not a figure bound to endear Paul to his audience. Gager acknowledges that, vis-à-vis Gal, Rom “show[s] Paul in a reflective mood, summarizing and refining his views following a period of turmoil and dispute.”⁵²¹ While a period of respite may indeed have led Paul to a more balanced rhetorical style, there are still too many differences in Gal and Rom to be glossed over as the consequence of a time for reflection.

⁵¹⁸ Gager, *Reinventing*, 59-61. Such a schema is implicit in Gaston’s work when he concludes that non-Judean non-Jews are made righteous from the “faithfulness of Christ,” ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 11, 73.

⁵¹⁹ Gager, *Reinventing*, 64-66.

⁵²⁰ Gager, *Reinventing*, 61.

⁵²¹ Gager, *Origins*, 213.

On matters of the Law and justification, I acknowledge my debt to these scholars despite this difference on the implied audience. My reading does not contravene the reading that Gaston *et al.* promote about the Law *because* I see the audience for Rom as being non-Judean *Jewish* Jesus followers from whom Paul seeks support. I am more amenable to reading Paul's writings on the Law as supporting its continuation and relevance for Jews. Paul's task in Rom was to convince the audience that the Law, or parts distinctive for Jews, was not to apply to non-Jews, even non-Jewish Jesus followers.

In order to provide a desired background to my exposition on Paul and the Law in Rom, I begin with a review of the very notion of "law" among the peoples with whom Paul worked and to whom Paul wrote. The point of this review is to reinforce the realization that for ancient Mediterranean people – Jews, Greeks, and Romans – "law" bore positive connotations. After this, I turn specifically to the relation of non-Jews to the Law in the eyes of Jews contemporary with Paul. Then I will discuss key passages in Rom.

Understandings of "Law" by Greeks, Jews, and Paul

Greek and Roman Perspective of Law

A 21st century American may be conscious of an automatic, allergic reaction to the term "law." For that person, scenes of Jews dancing with Torah scrolls in celebration of the establishment of the Law are so counter cultural as to be incomprehensible: why would anyone celebrate getting laws? Paul and his contemporaries did not share this reaction. Instead law represented civilization. The sixty-nine page entry in *TDNT* stresses the ties in classical Greek between νόμος, usually translated "law," and the divine. In

classical Greece, νόμος was divinely instituted for the city's citizens, so that to be "in bondage under the law" made a man a citizen and "differentiates him from the slave who by nature has not part or lot in the νόμος . . ."⁵²² That is, νόμος provides a divinely formed and sanctioned identity marker differentiating the class and social standing of the free citizen from the slave.⁵²³

Νόμος had a wide range of connotations in antiquity. The first definition in LSJ is "a feeding place for cattle." From this is derived the meaning of an allocation of property, and then as a third meaning the meaning usually associated with Paul's letters: "anything assigned, a usage, custom, law".⁵²⁴ BDAG, more narrowly focused on Christian literature, limits the meaning of the term. The first use given is generic, of any law, and the second is "a rule . . . principle, norm." Thereafter the definitions focus even more on Hebrew and Christian writing.⁵²⁵ In the Greek worldview, νόμος was a forceful actor in the world. H. Kleinknecht identified at least two functions for νόμος:

It is that wherein a being, or something of intrinsic validity, is discovered and apprehended. . . . It is "the ancient, valid and effective order which does not

⁵²² "νόμος, κ.τ.λ." H. Kleinknecht, *TDNT*, 3.1030. Betz comments on the "general Hellenistic concept that the law is a divine gift to man and must be regarded as an indispensable instrument for controlling criminal acts." The famous quotation from Pindar, Νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς θνατῶν τε καὶ ἀθανάτων ("Law is the ruler of all, mortals and immortals alike") Betz describes as having an enormous impact on Greek legal theory. Betz, *Galatians*, 164, and n. 23.

⁵²³ It may be in this sense that Paul uses the term at 1 Cor. 9:20: "To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law [ὑπὸ νόμον] I became like one under the law [ὑπὸ νόμον] -- though I myself am not under the law [ὑπὸ νόμον] -- to win over those under the law [ὑπὸ νόμον]." Paul would be contrasting the personas he assumed when preaching either to Jews or to non-Judean non-Jews. The first category of non-Judean non-Jews would be the free citizens: the civilized segments of society.

⁵²⁴ LSJ, "νόμος," 1180.

⁵²⁵ BAGD, "νόμος," 542.

merely issue orders but creates order which does not merely command, require or prohibit but rules . . .”⁵²⁶

This Greek understanding that νόμος was active in the world was shared, as we shall see, by Jews in general and Paul in particular.

Kleinknecht concludes his essay with a revealing paragraph that provides a neat summary of a position *against which I am arguing*.

With its understanding of the concept of law the Greek world missed the true meaning of law from the NT standpoint. For, to the Greek, law is never that which, rightly understood, crushes him and reduces him to despair by making him aware that he cannot keep it. On the contrary, because it no longer has an objective historical νόμος, and philosophy can no longer supply this, later antiquity despairs of law.⁵²⁷

Kleinknecht here characterizes the New Testament understanding of law as oppressive, reducing one to despair because no one can keep it.

Kleinknecht argues that for the Greek speakers to whom Paul wrote, νόμος had become disconnected from the life around them. The history of the previous 150 years certainly would not have raised hopes in any reasonable observer that a law-abiding society – especially a society in which peaceful, legislated successions to power were the norm and not the exception – was possible. As a consequence, while the imperial administration of the teenaged emperor Nero may have shown signs of a return to principles of orderly legal developments, a Roman audience may have simply waited with baited breath the next episode in the depressingly long saga of imperial folly.

⁵²⁶ H. Kleinknecht, “νόμος, κ.τ.λ.,” 1035. Quotation from Cr.-Kö., 749. Cf. Xenophon “Mem.,” IV.4.24., Plato, *Laws*, IV.716a.

⁵²⁷ H. Kleinknecht, “νόμος, κ.τ.λ.,” 1035.

A sense of despair about how long an absolute monarch will consent to be ruled by law is not, however, the same as a sense of despair about the concept of law itself. On the contrary, a society living under capricious authoritarianism is exactly the society that may most revere the notion of a society under law. In his *Phaedra*, Plato records Socrates' despairing of justice in Athens, but having such respect for the law of Athens to be willing to follow its provisions to his death. Development of a legal system applicable to the entire empire was one of the important achievements of the Romans. The legal system "made of one blood all nations," through the "confirmation of conquest by regulation and reason."⁵²⁸ The Romans, largely inventors of the study of jurisprudence, certainly shared Socrates's appreciation for the law.⁵²⁹ Thus we have no reason to believe that a Roman audience would be anything but supportive of the concept of a society ordered by a system of laws.

Jewish Perspective on the Law

Jews shared this basically positive view of law with Greeks and Romans. The Scriptures from which Paul quotes extensively in Rom – Deut, Isa, and Pss – display a similar range of meanings and connotations for the Hebrew תורה (Torah). Notable are the Pss insistence that the people of Israel rejoice to have divine instruction. Ps 1 opens the psalter with praise for the one who meditates on the law night and day (1:1-2). The conviction that the Law was a special gift to Israel (not a burden) is memorialized in Ps

⁵²⁸ Grant Showerman, *Rome and the Romans: A Survey and Interpretation* (New York: Cooper Square, 1969), 503-04. For a synopsis of the history of Roman Law see Olga Tellegen-Couperus, *Short History of Roman Law* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁵²⁹ Tellegen-Couperus, *Short History of Roman Law*, 62.

147: “He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation, they do not know his ordinances. Praise the LORD” (vv. 19-20, *NRSV*). Of its use in Ps 119, F. Garcia López comments that “the [Vulgate] calls Ps. 119 a ‘celebration of God’s law’ . . .”⁵³⁰ Garcia Lopez documents the common understanding of Torah in Deutero-Isa and in the Pss as “the revelation of God’s will” in either written or oral form.⁵³¹ As the term appears in Deut, it “includes not only prophetic and legal features but also didactic, sapiential elements. . . . [Deuteronomy] presents Moses as a scribe at pains to pass on his teaching.”⁵³²

I believe that Paul capitalized on this latter sapiential element of תורה / νόμος when writing. While the term νόμος appears almost 100 times in the Pauline letters, σοφ—, as noun or adjective, appears but 34 times, the majority, 28, in 1 Cor. The paucity of use of σοφία is surprising since Paul provides extensive paraenetic teaching in his letters that in similar literature involves the concept of wisdom and the term σοφία. Dunn points out that in early Judaism Wisdom is what invented and ordered the world:

The thought in the theology of Israel and early Judaism was never of Wisdom (or Word) as separate beings from God, able to be conceived as independent personalities from God. Rather they were the presence of God in the world, God acting upon the world, the God-impressed moral and rational fabric without which the world and society cannot properly function as God intended.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ F. Garcia López and Heinz-Josef Fabry, תורה, *TDOT*, vol. 15, 609-46, here 630.

⁵³¹ Garcia López and Fabry, תורה, 627, 629.

⁵³² Garcia López and Fabry, תורה, 641.

⁵³³ Dunn, *Worship*, 124.

In his writing, Paul generally references *human* wisdom, however, when using the term σοφία – 20 times in 1 Cor 1-2. As a consequence, Pauline σοφία has a distinctly negative connotation, contrasting with the divine wisdom and plan unfolded in Jesus Christ. Rather than seeing wisdom as a ruling principle in the universe, Paul employs the sapiential, revelatory function of Torah as the disclosure of the presence of God in creation. This sense of νόμος combines both the Hellenistic and the Jewish connotations. Such is Paul’s use in Rom 2:20, “. . . having in law the semblance of knowledge and truth,” in 7:14 “. . . the law is spiritual,” and 8:7 “because of this the reasoning of the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to the law of God.”.

Because of the breadth of the actions of νόμος, Paul had a much broader sense of the term νόμος than just the commandments recorded in Exod 20 and Deut 5. Within the Torah, Paul relies heavily on narrative material. I have described, for instance, his use of the Abraham cycle in both Gal and Rom. In addition, his references include much more than just these five books of Moses. For example, Paul describes the catena in Rom 3:10-18 as Law (3:19), even though the catena includes no citations from the Pentateuch. At 1 Cor 14:21, Paul speaks of the Law when quoting Isa 28:11. Paul also may speak of non-Jewish law. In Rom 13 (and arguably Rom 7) Paul refers to civil law, while in Rom 1:19 ff and 7:7ff. some argue that Paul is referring to “natural” law.

Michael Winger confirmed Paul’s broad use of νόμος in the seven uncontested letters.⁵³⁴ Winger enumerated three major ways that Paul saw νόμος functioning: a

⁵³⁴ Michael Winger, *By what Law?: The Meaning of ΝΟΜΟΣ in the Letters of Paul* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1992).

standard for judgment (17 of 118 occurrences); a guide to conduct (23 occurrences); and a control (31 occurrences).⁵³⁵ In Gal 3:24, Paul summarizes these functions, describing the Mosaic Law as a pedagogue “leading to Christ in order that we might be justified by faithfulness.” Winger identified 55 of the 74 occurrences of νόμος in Rom as certainly or probably referring to the Jewish Law.⁵³⁶ In addition, Paul cites eight other distinct types of law in Rom, of which five have a positive connotation (law of faithfulness, 3:27; marriage, 7:2; God, 7:22, 25; 8:7; mind, 7:23b; spirit of life in Christ Jesus, 8:2; and righteousness, 9:31) and three negative (law of works, 3:27; the mind, 7:23c and sin, 7:25; 8:2).⁵³⁷ Consonant with both the Greek and Jewish understanding, Paul expects a νόμος to direct human behavior, whether in a beneficial or detrimental direction. Thus, for Paul νόμος is an active force in a person’s life.⁵³⁸

In sum, I see no reason to suppose that either Paul himself or the audience he envisioned for Rom would project a negative connotation onto the term νόμος. The audience might have had devastating encounters with a specific command, injunction, or

⁵³⁵ Winger, *By What Law?*, 90. As shown above, Dunn provides a similar list of functions of the law: defining sin, protecting and disciplining Israel from the time of Moses to Christ, giving Israel direction in its life and providing terms on which Israel’s status was to be maintained, but used by sin to ensnare human weakness in the flesh. Dunn, *Theology*, 159-61.

⁵³⁶ Winger, *By What Law?*, 78-81, 85.

⁵³⁷ Winger, *By What Law?*, 82. These have been identified as νόμος plus a genitive.

⁵³⁸ As will be discussed below, Paul’s concept of law as “active,” can be overstated. Law is an objective, real standard and may well be a creative force in the cosmos. As to the individual, however, we shall see that the Law generally is passive.

Paul’s extensive use of the term νόμος contrasts with his more limited use of the term ἐντολή, commandment. This term appears only nine times in the undisputed letters, six times in Rom 7:8-13 where Paul describes the difficulty of keeping the commandments. In the rest of the New Testament, the occurrence of the terms is more even, with ἐντολή appearing about 60 times, while νόμος appears approximately 75 times outside of the undisputed letters.

statute – an ἐντολή – but there could still be a residual respect for νόμος. If Kleinnecht were correct and the New Testament connotation of νόμος is negative, then “Jews first and then Greeks” could miss the import of Paul’s references.

All are Subject to the Law

Non-Judean, Non-Jews Subject to the Law

For both Greeks and Jews, “law” orders the working of the universe and all people within it are “under the law.” For Jews, this raises the issue of the place of non-Judean non-Jews within the Law. Terence Donaldson has portrayed a range of Jewish attitudes towards Gentiles, from the perception that all non-Jews will be destroyed at the end times (e.g., *Jub.* 15:26) to an expectation that at the eschatological restoration of Jews (end of foreign occupation of the Land; return of the diaspora; inauguration of the universal rule of God), the other nations will come to Zion and the worship of the God of Israel (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 3:657-808; in Biblical literature, Isa 60:1-11; Ps 72/LXX 71).⁵³⁹ In the literature, destruction of non-Jews who do not conform to the Law was often justified on the basis that the Law was revealed to all nations, but only the Jews accepted it (e.g., 4 *Ezra* 7:72).⁵⁴⁰ In all cases, writers held that non-Jews are to conform to the Jewish law although the particular provisions of the Law as regards non-Jews may be disputed.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁹ Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 51-78. Donaldson points out (page 75) that interest in the other nations is derived from an interest in Israel's ultimate international triumph, within which context the authors must account for the disposition of the other nations.

⁵⁴⁰ Donaldson, *Remapping*, 53-54.

⁵⁴¹ Donaldson, *Remapping*, 74.

Gaston concentrated on those first century Jews who believed non-Judean non-Jews could be righteous, and “‘have a share in the world to come’ (*TSanh* 13:2 -- R. Joshua, end of first century).”⁵⁴² To be righteous is to have a relationship with God based on the revelation of the Torah, and Torah involves commandments.⁵⁴³ As to which commandments non-Judean non-Jews must follow, Gaston reached a conclusion similar to Donaldson’s, that Jewish teaching (at least before Maimonides in the 12th century C.E.) provided no definitive catalogue of commandments appropriate to non-Jews.⁵⁴⁴

Paul exhibits the range of attitudes towards non-Judean non-Jews documented by Donaldson. His letters both highlight an impaired human nature, and describe the possibility of the non-circumcised carrying out the Law (Rom 2:13-15). Based on Rom 3:23, Paul judges that all human nature is impaired, liable to sin: “for all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God.” The interlocutor in Rom 7 witnesses to an inability to respond to the Law in the claim that hearing the commandment prohibiting coveting produced covetousness in him (v. 7). Later, the interlocutor describes an inability to do the good that the interlocutor wishes to accomplish: the will is simply not strong enough (vv. 15, 18-21).⁵⁴⁵ This treatment is consonant with Paul’s reference at Gal 2:14-15 to

⁵⁴² Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 23.

⁵⁴³ Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 23. Donaldson, *Remapping*, 74.

⁵⁴⁴ Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 23-25.

⁵⁴⁵ I have been convinced that the “I” statements in ch. 7 are made by the same interlocutor who engaged Paul in chs 2-3. Here the interlocutor is expressing his status before submitting fully to the Law, i.e., becoming a Jew. I argue this point more fully below. It is a contested position. That the interlocutor is Adam, see Dunn, *Theology*, 98-100. Jewett holds for a reformulated identification of the speaker as Paul himself. Jewett, *Romans*, 441-45. Jewett includes a brief history of the scholarly discussion on this point in the same pages. On the other hand, Stower’s analysis of 7:7-25 concludes that Paul is using the rhetorical form of speech-in-character and the interlocutor is a non-Jew “who had associated with Judaism before

non-Jews as “sinners” (ἁμαρτωλοί) by nature. On the other hand, at Rom 2:26-29 and 1 Cor 7:19, Paul describes a non-Judean non-Jew who keeps the precepts of the Law (cf. Rom 2:10). Based on the narrative of Rom 1:19-32, Paul apparently believes that not only *can* non-Judean non-Jews follow the precepts of the Law, they are obligated to do so. As consequence of their stereotypical idolatry “God handed them over” (παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς [v. 24]) to impurity. Paul’s narrative implies non-Judean, non-Jews who do not follow Jesus are subject to the commandment against graven images (Exod 34:17; Lev 19:4, 26:1).

While Donaldson and Gaston are cautious about their ability to specify the specific commandments non-Judean non-Jews are to follow to be righteous, there are some which are obvious. The first, as mentioned above, is the commandment to shun idols. At Gal 5:14 Paul cites the “love commandment,” “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18; cf. Rom 13:8-9).⁵⁴⁶ More importantly than the citation of individual provisions of the Torah is Paul’s understanding that the way the world is ordered is revealed in the Law; that is, the Scriptures. Viewed from Paul’s perspective, Gen 1-16, from creation to Abraham’s circumcision, describes the provisions about and location of

coming to Christ.” Stanley K. Stowers, “Romans 7.7-25 as a Speech-in-Character (προσωποποιία),” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 1994), 180-202, here 201. Also Stowers, *Rereading*, 260-82. Origen also identified the “I” speech as “speech in character,” using the voice of the person who is “not yet spiritual but fleshly.” Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (FC 103-104; trans. T. P. Scheck; 2 vols.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 36-42, quotation from 38.

⁵⁴⁶ At Rom 13:8-9 Paul cites Lev 19:18 again, as a summation, not negation, of the prohibitions of adultery, killing, stealing, and covetousness as well as “whatever other commandments” there are. It may be argued, however, that since in my construct Rom is addressed to non-Judean *Jewish* Jesus followers, the passage is not addressed to the behavior of non-Judean non-Jews.

non-Jews in the Law. This includes the divine imperatives in 1:28 (“Be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth”) and 2:15 (to care for the earth), and the punishment for fratricide (Gen 4:1-12). Most striking is the covenant God made with Noah (Gen 9:1-7). In return for God’s blessing (subjecting all creatures to humans, and covenanting to never again flood the earth), Noah and his offspring agreed to be fertile and multiply, to eat no blood, and to commit neither suicide nor murder. These mutual promises were entered into at the conclusion of Noah’s sacrifice to the LORD (Gen 8:20), linking worship acceptable to the LORD, the God of Israel, and the divine blessings. Galatians 3 and Rom 4 describe how non-Judean non-Jews become descendants of Abraham as a consequence of promises made before he was circumcised, before he was a “Jew.” The city of Sodom is an example of non-Judean non-Jews being subject to the Law even after the circumcision of Abraham. As remarked above, Donaldson enumerated the Jewish texts expecting an eschatological gathering of the nations to the worship of the God of Israel. These include the LORD judging among the nations (Isa 2:2-4) and the nations bearing lavish gifts to Israel (ch. 60).⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁷ Many scholars who disagree with my conclusion that Paul believed non-Judean, non-Jews who did not follow Jesus are subject to the Law cite Paul’s use of ἀνόμωσ at 2:12a, translating the adverb “apart from” or “without law.” The verse then reads “All who have sinned apart from the law [ἀνόμωσ] will also perish apart from the law [ἀνόμωσ], and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law” (NRSV). In this translation, one might conclude that non-Judean, non-Jews are outside the Law. Byrne, *Romans*, 87. Cranfield, *Romans*, 153-54. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.137. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 307-08. Käsemann, *Romans*, 61-62. Thomas Tobin recognizes the normal meaning of ἀνόμωσ to be “lawlessly,” but claims that he is making a word play on the word to mean “law-lessly.” Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 114, n. 22. Stowers has argued that the proper understanding of the term in this verse is “lawlessly,” as Tobin would normally translate it. Stowers, *Rereading*, 137. In this translation, the interpretation would be that those who sin “lawlessly” (consistent with the NRSV translation of the adjectival form at Rom 4:7 and 6:19) will meet a lawless, uncivilized, end. A TLG search uncovered 20 first century references to ἀνόμωσ, of which only one uses the adverb in reference to a condition “without the law.” The other 19 references refer to an action taken lawlessly. Similar analyses on the LXX appearances of the adverb or adjective show the

Jews Remain Subject to the Law

An underlying assumption of the discussion above is that non-Judean, non-Jews are not subject to the whole Law. This was certainly true for non-Jesus followers of Paul's time, but the question Paul addressed was whether this would also be true of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. There is now wide consensus among scholars that Paul believed that such distinctive identity markers as circumcision and dietary laws would not apply to non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers. Of more moment is the question of whether Paul believes that the same commandments were to apply to Judean and non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers – including his implied audience for Rom.

My conclusion is that in fact Paul did affirm the continuation of these provisions for Jews, including non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. Galatians 2:7-10 provides a strong case for this position. In these verses, Paul describes his meeting with James, Cephas, and John and the mutual agreement that Paul would continue to preach his gospel among the uncircumcised while Peter preached to the circumcised. Much of the focus of Gal is on the Pillars' recognition of Paul's gospel to the uncircumcised. What may be overlooked is Paul's recognition of the validity and efficacy of Peter's gospel to the circumcised, a gospel that we may assume practices more Torah-observant behavior

preponderance of usage to be "lawlessly." I conclude that the usage here confirms Paul's supposition that non-Judean non-Jews are subject to, not outside the Law.

than the practices Paul espoused.⁵⁴⁸ Never in Gal nor in any other letter does Paul question the validity of Peter's gospel.⁵⁴⁹

Later in Gal Paul warns the audience about the effect of circumcision, hence “*becoming a Jew*.”⁵⁵⁰ Paul argues that two things follow from this: Christ would be of no use to them and they must observe the whole Law (5:2-3). What we must not fail to realize is that Paul never says that by doing this the Galatians will not be “saved,” will not have life. They will be Jews, members of the covenant, without any benefit from Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

To be clear about this point, at no time does Paul deny the efficacy, the validity, the salvific effect of Peter's gospel to the circumcised. In the dialogue in Rom 3:1-20 Paul affirms the continuing value of the Law, of being a Jew. In none of his other letters, does Paul ever urge Judean or non-Judean Jews to forsake the Law and (in Gal) agrees that proclamation of this message to them is Peter's prerogative.⁵⁵¹ Taking it a step further, the fact that Paul is eager to collect financial support for the community of Jewish Jesus followers in Jerusalem (Gal 2:10; cf Rom 15:25-28 and 1 Cor 16:1-4) demonstrates that Paul considers his communities to be in fellowship with and share responsibility for communities built on Peter's message. Whatever the causes of the dispute between Paul and Peter in Antioch, it is not over the “orthodoxy” of Peter's gospel.

⁵⁴⁸ Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 21.

⁵⁴⁹ Bassler, *Navigating Paul*, 21.

⁵⁵⁰ Betz, *Galatians*, 258.

⁵⁵¹ Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, 248.

Rom 7 suggests that Paul had doubts about the ability of non-Jews to observe the provisions of the Law applicable to them, but there is no evidence to say that the faithful Jew, a member of the covenant, could not observe the Law and receive the promises God made to the physical descendants of Abraham. I conclude from this that in Gal Paul simply does not want his charges to become Jews but argues that they can remain uncircumcised non-Jews who will reap the benefits of the life of Christ.

My conclusions, then, are that Paul expected that certain provisions of the Law would continue to apply to non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers, such as Paul knew in the East, and the whole of the Law would continue to apply to Jewish Jesus followers. There are two sections in Rom in which Paul discusses the Law and its relationship to Jesus followers. The first is chs. 6-8, with special emphasis on ch. 7, and the second is 9:29-10:14 with special focus on 10:4. In the next two sections, I discuss each of these.

Romans 6-8: How Non-Judean Non-Jewish Jesus Followers Attain Righteousness

These three chapters form a unit and address the question that an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers might raise (especially after Paul has given voice to their stereotype of idolatrous fornicating non-Judean non-Jews): how can observant Jews be in communion with non-Judean, non-Jews, even though both are Jesus followers? Paul argues that the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers of his communities having died with Christ in Baptism now live with Christ in a new life that insures they will live ethically (ch. 6). In the following chapter, Paul treats explicitly of the Law in the lives of all Jesus followers. While non-Judean non-Jewish non-Jesus followers are unable to maintain the Law, in ch. 8 Paul explains that the Spirit will bring new life to the Jesus

follower. Within these three chapters, Romans 7 especially focused Paul's audience on the question of the continuing importance of the Law, emphasized by the 23 uses of νόμος, nearly one-third the total references in all of Rom. Because of the importance of the Law to the argument in Rom 7, this section includes an extended exegesis of the chapter. My assumption is that Paul is writing to a Jewish audience in Rome and, since he is requesting assistance from them, he is careful not to antagonize them. Therefore, I expect his treatment of the Law to be positive.

The Argument of Chapter 6

The theme of chapter 6 is set in the interlocutor's question in verse 1, repeated with a variation in verse 15 and paraphrased, "With all of God's graciousness abounding and no law binding, isn't the logic of your gospel that everyone should continue to sin?" To these questions, Paul responds with his emphatic μὴ γένοιτο! The interlocutor's questions echo the questions raised by the interlocutor in ch. 3.⁵⁵² There Paul was asked the value of being Jewish (3:1, 9), of observing the Law and there he specifically affirmed the value of circumcision in every respect (πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, 3.2). At 3:8, Paul himself voices the question behind 6:1: "Am I saying that we shall do evil in order that good might come?" As in ch. 3, so in ch. 6 Paul enters a dialogue with the interlocutor, through questions steering the dialogue to his teaching on the effects of the rite of baptism. Paul argues that the non-Jewish Jesus follower has been baptized into the death of Jesus so as to live in the life of the resurrected Jesus.

⁵⁵² I argue that the interlocutor in ch. 2, who raises questions in ch.3 is the same interlocutor in ch. 6. Paul's rhetoric signals this since Paul has not indicated that the interlocutor has changed and since the interlocutors raise closely related questions, as discussed above.

Paul emphasizes the relationships among sin (17 references), death (11 references), and life (10 references). As the Jesus follower is called to the new life of living *with* Christ (v. 8), she has the power to live *as* Christ.⁵⁵³ The crucial point is that while non-Judean non-Jews did not follow Jesus, they lived under the law and sin brought death. Now Jesus followers have died with Christ and, as Christ was raised so Jesus followers united with him will also be raised. With this new life, the non-Jews whom Paul converted are now as alive and obedient to the God of Israel as are the Jews in Rome.

In this reading, the chapter is not an exhortation by Paul to the Roman audience to live up to their baptismal pledges – Paul assumes the audience is quite prepared to do so – but rather Paul explains how his gospel leads not to lawlessness and anarchy but to life with Christ. As Tobin writes,

In Romans 6, Paul is primarily concerned with the ethical dispositions that believers should have. He emphasizes how these dispositions are completely incompatible with sin or with any notion of freedom as a license to do whatever one wants. Paul is not trying to convince the Roman Christians of this. They are already convinced. Rather, he is trying to convince them that he is of the same opinion.⁵⁵⁴

Reading with Tobin, the characterizations of the past life of the persons addressed in verses 17 (“once slaves of sin”), and 19 (“slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness for

⁵⁵³ Byrne, for example, argues that through baptism the Jesus’ follower participates in Christ’s life. Brendan Byrne, “Living Out the Righteousness of God : The Contribution of Rom 6:1-8:13 to an Understanding of Paul’s Ethical Presuppositions,” *CBQ* 43, no. 4 (1981): 557-81, especially 563.

⁵⁵⁴ Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 217. Fitzmyer comments in a similar vein: “Now Paul . . . contrasts the indicative (you are a Christian!) with the imperative (become the Christian that you have been enabled to become!); you have died to sin so put to death the old self.” Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 430.

lawlessness”) while addressed to the audience also represent the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers of Paul’s own communities.⁵⁵⁵

It is noteworthy that Paul’s teaching in Rom on baptism seems to ignore critical aspects of his teaching in 1 Cor and Gal, the other two letters with explicit references to baptism. The effect of baptism in the other two letters is not to conquer sin and death as in Rom, but to form a new body composed of Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, men and women (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13). The omission here is striking if, as seems certain, Paul is striving to affirm the unity of non-Judean non-Jewish and non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers. A clue as to why Paul might have chosen to omit this language comes in Paul’s ambiguous language when introducing baptism at 6:3. The verse reads (in part) ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, (“as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus”).⁵⁵⁶ The natural inference is that some, but not all, of the Jesus followers were baptized into Christ and some were not. That very ambiguity, especially an ambiguity in Paul’s own mind about the status of the Roman audience, would explain why Paul does not emphasize baptism as creating one body. In his correspondence with non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers in Corinth and Galatia, Paul assumes baptism in Christ has

⁵⁵⁵ Stowers opens his discussion of ch. 6 with “The voice of chapter 6, unlike that of 1-5, speaks in the first and second persons plural. Exegetes and commentators unanimously recognize that Paul is speaking with (‘we’) and to (‘you’) and about his ‘Roman audience’.” Stowers’s major point, however, is that ch. 6 is addressed to non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus’ followers, former “Godfearers,” whose life before becoming Jesus’ followers might be characterized by the practices in 1:18-32. Stowers, *Rereading*, 255-56. I agree that the Roman audience is composed of those who were first non-Judean, non-Jews who, at that time, could have been characterized by Rom 1:18-32. The point of my work is that Paul envisioned his audience as having converted to Judaism before or simultaneously with acknowledging Jesus as Messiah.

⁵⁵⁶ Paul uses a similar construction at Gal 3:27: “ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἔνεδυσσασθε,” “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ clothed yourselves with Christ.”

occurred (cf. 1 Cor 1:13; Gal 3:27). If Paul wrote Rom with an implied audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers in mind, Paul might be uncertain as to whether they were baptized into Christ Jesus. Such a baptism could have meant being baptized *twice*, once in the conversion to Judaism and once into Christ.⁵⁵⁷ To the extent that following Jesus was considered one of the options for being a Jew – accepting Jesus as the Jewish Messiah – this second baptism may not have been required. Hence, when writing to Roman non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers, Paul would tend to equivocate about their having experienced the same baptismal rituals as did the Corinthians and Galatians.

Tobin also draws attention to another difference between Rom 6 and comparable discussions in 1 Cor and Gal: Paul’s silence on both the Law and the Spirit.⁵⁵⁸ While both are treated later in Rom (chs. 7 and 8 respectively), reading Rom. 6 as an explanation to a skeptical audience of the ethical impact of Paul’s gospel provides the context for their omission. Tobin opines that the Romans may have been taken aback by reports from Corinth of the behavior of the congregations there (perhaps from reading sections of Paul’s own letters on sexual immorality there) and could have had “deep misgivings” about Paul’s teaching on the Law, perhaps as manifest in Paul’s equation of the Law of Moses with a “yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1).⁵⁵⁹ In Rom 6, Paul addresses the first of these concerns: baptism into the death of Christ brings freedom from sin and obedient slavery

⁵⁵⁷ “Since Second Temple times, there have been four basic requirements for conversion to Judaism: (1) acceptance of the Torah, (2) circumcision for males, (3) immersion, and (4) sacrifice . . .” Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew?*, 19. Epictetus: “But when he adopts the attitude of mind of the man who has been baptized and has made his choice, then he both is a Jew in fact and is also called one.” *Diss.* 20.

⁵⁵⁸ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 217-18.

⁵⁵⁹ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 217-18.

to the faithfulness of God. Grace is sufficient to protect against sin. With this matter cleared up, Paul turns to the role of the Law in his gospel in Rom 7.

The Law in Romans 7

Romans 7 is a complicated argument, requiring careful attention to the way Paul uses language and rhetorical figures. In approaching this chapter, I do not start from the assumption that Paul must be writing here of his “law-free” gospel. I do not start from Kleinknecht’s view that Law in the NT is that which “crushes him and reduces him to despair by making him aware that he cannot keep it.”⁵⁶⁰ Rather I assume that Paul, a Jew, writing to a community of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers, supports the Law and believes it works for good in the world. Paul does not believe that the Law has ended and he does not propose that the Roman Jesus followers are free from such declarations in the Law as the sovereignty of the one true God in Deut 6:4.⁵⁶¹ In these assumptions he can expect to be joined by other civilized people including the recipients in Rome. I argue that my translation and interpretation of this chapter sustain these assumptions.

Translation of Rom 7:1-6

The first six verses introduce the working of the Law in the life of the Jesus follower by using an example of the change in status of a woman from wife to widow on the death of her husband. Most scholars follow the sense of the NRSV translation which I reproduce below.

⁵⁶⁰ H. Kleinknecht, “νόμος, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 1035.

⁵⁶¹ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 8.

¹Do you not know, brothers and sisters – for I am speaking to those who know the law – that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? ²Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.

³Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. ⁴In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. (NRSV)

Most scholars understand this section as providing an example of how the woman is liberated *from* the law by the death of her husband (v. 2) just as Jesus frees Jesus followers from the law. Jewett, for example, titles the section “Syllogism Concerning Life in Christ as Freedom from the Law.”⁵⁶² This section in Dunn’s commentary is entitled “The Believer Has Been Released from the Law Which Condemned to Death” and includes a traditional translation of v. 3, “But if her husband dies, she is free from the law . . .” He comments in part: “The imagery of 6:18-22 [i.e., being freed from sin] is still strongly in Paul’s mind, with, once again, the clear implication that the law belongs with sin as the power which dominates the age of Adam and from which deliverance is necessary.”⁵⁶³

⁵⁶² Jewett, *Romans*, 428. Others include Byrne, *Romans*, 208-13. Dunn, *Romans*, 368-69. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 454-56. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 220-25.

⁵⁶³ Dunn, *Romans*, 360-361.

In a 1984 article, Joyce A. Little developed a parallel reading of chs. 6 and 7. As ch. 6 proclaimed freedom from sin, ch. 7 proclaims freedom from the law.⁵⁶⁴ She does not explicitly recognize an equivalence, in Paul's mind, between "sin" and "law" in the way Dunn does. Nevertheless, by pairing "sin" (ἁμαρτία) and "law" it seems clear that this is in her thinking. Furthermore, while Dunn does not argue that the structure is exactly parallel, Little fleshes out the structure implicit in Dunn's comments about the imagery of 6:18-22 being fresh in Paul's mind.

I resist this interpretation of Paul's meaning in these six verses, and have prepared the close, extended analysis of the translation of these six verses found in Appendix C. In my translation, the law works to liberate the woman from her dead husband and to slay the Jesus follower. Below I compare my translation with the Greek of these six verses.

¹ Do you not know, brothers, for I speak to ones knowing the law, that the law rules over a human as long as the human lives? ² So a married woman has been bound by the law to a living husband; but if the husband should die, she has been released by the law from her husband. ³ In accordance with the law, she will be called "adulteress" if, while her husband would live, she becomes another man's; but if the husband would die, she is free, under the terms of the law, to become another man's and not be an adulteress. ⁴ So also, my brothers, by the Law you were slain through the body of Christ so you became another's, the one raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit to God. ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the consequences of sins were working in our limbs through the law in order to bear fruit to death. ⁶ Now we, facing death in which we used to be held fast, are discharged by the law so we might serve in a new age of the spirit and not in an old age of words.

Ἦ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκεισιν γὰρ νόμου λαλῶ, ὅτι ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ; ² ἢ γὰρ ὕπανδρος γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδεταί νόμῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, κατήρηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός. ³ ἄρα οὖν ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός μοιχαλὶς χρηματίζει ἐὰν γένηται

⁵⁶⁴ Joyce A. Little, "Paul's Use of Analogy: A Structural Analysis of Romans 7:1-6," *CBQ* 46, no. April (1984): 82-90.

ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ. ⁴ ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἑθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ, τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι, ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ. ⁵ ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν, εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ. ⁶ νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν κανότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος.

This translation preserves the principle that the Law is active. It will be recalled that Winger concluded that of the seven characteristics of the Law, Paul most often cites the function of “Law as Control.”⁵⁶⁶ In these six verses, the Law “rules,” “binds,” “releases,” “slays,” works the consequences of sin through our limbs, “discharges,” and brands as adulteress a married woman who “becomes another man’s.” One function infrequently recognized is Law as liberating, releasing the wife from bonds to the husband (vv. 2 and 3), and Jesus followers from death (v.6; cf. 10:4). The NRSV and other versions state that the woman is separated *from* the Law by her husband’s death, despite this contradiction with v. 1.⁵⁶⁷ In my reading, Paul claims that the woman is not liberated from the Law (since she is not) but from her dead husband (under the provisions of marriage law).

I wish to highlight two critical translation decisions which differ from the standard commentaries and versions. Because I view the Law as active in the life of the

⁵⁶⁵ Appendix C is an extended discussion of this translation.

⁵⁶⁶ Winger, *By What Law?*, 90.

⁵⁶⁷ The traditional translation also contradicts the provisions of both Roman and Jewish marriage laws which control the behavior of widows. Under Roman law, a widow was forbidden to marry for one year after her husband’s death, but must then remarry within the next eight months. Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 500. Deuteronomy 25:5 is usually thought of as imposing an obligation on the brother-in-law of a childless widow to marry her. The commandment concerns her as well, however: “. . . the widow of the man shall not marry anyone outside the family . . .” (JPS). Jewett and Dunn actually do note the restrictions on the widow posed by Roman law, but nevertheless treat the phrase as signifying a separation *from* the Law. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.360. Jewett, *Romans*, 431.

wife, I translate the dative νόμῳ in vv. 2, 4 and 6 as instrumental datives, rather than the usual datives of respect.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, the Law binds the woman (v. 2), slays the Jesus follower through the body of Christ (v. 4) and discharges the Jesus follower from death (v. 6).

The second critical choice is my translation of ἀπὸ as “by” in the phrases “a woman is released by the Law” (v. 2) and “we are discharged by the Law” (v. 6). In contrast, the NRSV and major commentators translate the same phrases “released/discharged *from* the Law.”⁵⁶⁹ I support my choice first from the clear meaning of the passage: according to 7:1 every living human is under the Law and the widow is still living. Therefore she must not have been discharged from the Law.

Use of ἀπὸ as a preposition pointing to source or origin of a power or agency (rather than distancing) is also supported by Paul’s own use and parallels elsewhere in the NT. Paul uses the preposition regularly in his introductory greetings as at Rom 1:7b: “Grace and peace to you from [ἀπὸ] God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ” (see also 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:2). At 1 Cor 1:30 Paul cites God as the source of Jesus’ wisdom in the phrase ὅς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, “who became for us wisdom from God.” As another example of this use of ἀπὸ by Paul, I argue in Appendix C that in Rom 9:3 Paul declares his willingness to be destroyed by Christ for the benefit of his

⁵⁶⁸ In general commentators also translate νόμῳ in v. 2a as an instrumental dative. For example, Jewett: “For a woman is bound by the law as long as her husband is alive.” Jewett, *Romans*, 428. This is the same treatment in NRSV, RSV, and NAB.

⁵⁶⁹ In addition to Jewett and Dunn referenced above, Sanday and Headlam: “. . . but if her husband should die, she is absolved from the provisions of the statute ‘Of the Husband’.” Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 170. “. . . she is released from the law regarding her husband.” Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 454. “. . . she is free from the law that bound her to the husband.” Byrne, *Romans*, 208.

kinsmen (ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). In this use ἀπὸ is even more closely tied to agency.

In his study of the uses of prepositions in the NT, Murray Harris cites Matt 11:19, Luke 17:25, and Acts 12:20 as showing the use of ἀπὸ connoting source or origin, in addition to the Pauline citations. Harris also cites James 1:13, and 2 Pet 1:21 as instances of the use of ἀπὸ Θεοῦ to define God as the source of an action.⁵⁷⁰ Hence it is probable that the first hearers of Rom would understand this use of the preposition.

Verses 4-6 describe the relation of the Law, the unbaptized, and Christ. In ch. 6, baptism was described as the death of the Jesus follower with Christ so that the faithful will rise with Christ to a new life. In 7:4, Paul uses an aorist passive verb to describe a one-time action, “by the Law you were slain.”⁵⁷¹ The remark harkens back to ch. 6, and the baptism that marks the death of the Jesus follower. We remarked earlier that some commentators noted the lack of any reference to the Law in ch. 6. Now Paul reveals the relation between baptism and the Law, for “by the Law you were slain,” that is, brought to baptism and thereby to Christ. This baptism carries the Jesus follower “through the body of Christ” to a new life.

Most commentators read νόμῳ in vv. 4 as a dative of respect: “you were slain with respect to the Law,” and draw the conclusion that Paul claims that the baptized Jesus follower is free from the constraints of the Law. While fearing to be reckoned hopelessly

⁵⁷⁰ Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2012), 58-60.

⁵⁷¹ Jewett remarks that the passive form “places a strong emphasis on divine initiative and θανατόω (“put to death”) is arguably a forceful expression of intentional execution . . .” Jewett, *Romans*, 433.

redundant, I do need to point out that this conclusion flies in the face of the statement in 7:1 that all living humans are subject to the Law, and in the face of the affirmations of the Law in ch. 3. Within the context of chs. 6-8, the phrase relates in particular to how both the Roman Jews and Paul's communities of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers came to be Jesus followers: it was through the Law, the prophecies referenced in Rom 1, the story of Abraham in ch. 4, of Adam in ch. 5 – indeed, through all of the Scriptures that point to Jesus Christ as the goal of the Law (10:4). Thus I would paraphrase 7:4, “So brothers and sisters, by the Law you were brought to baptism in the body of Christ so you belong to another, the one raised from the dead, in order that together we might bear fruit for God.”

In v. 5, Paul provides a contrast, showing the role of the Law in the life of the Jesus follower before conversion. In that time, the consequence of Sin [τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν] was death. The Law did not prevent Sin but, acting as a judge, brought death. In contrast, the consequence of living in Christ is bearing fruit to God. Again, referring to the questions which drove the discussion in ch. 6, Paul affirms here that the Law worked in the past in the lives of his non-Jewish Jesus followers, brought them to baptism, and now works to bring fruit to God.

Verse 6 carries the action forward: “now we, having died once in which we were bound, are released [from death, the consequence of sin] by the Law, so that we might serve in a new spiritual age and not in an old age of words.”

A Speech in Character: Romans 7:7-24

At v. 7a, the question is posed “If all that is true, does this mean that the Law is Sin?” (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία;) After all, in verse 5, Paul asserts that Sin works through the Law to bring death; it is not far-fetched to wonder whether this line of reasoning about the interplay between Law and Sin amounts to a statement of equivalence between them. As usual with a question that draws a false conclusion from the previous discussion, Paul’s response is μὴ γένοιτο.

In v. 7b, the subject switches from the rhetorical, authorial first person plural “we,” to the first person singular “I,” who laments an inability to follow the Law. The Law in fact leads to sin – all as demonstrated by sinning though knowing better (vv. 7b, 15). Because the “I” claims that the Law has led him to be a sinner, potentially a claim against the Law, pinpointing the identity of the “I” takes on importance. As Jewett writes:

The remarkable shift to “I” as the subject of the verbs in this [vv. 7:7-12] and the succeeding pericope [vv. 13-25] is a stylistic feature that determines how both pericopes should be interpreted. In the immense scholarly debate about this feature, two separate questions have remained entangled: Is the “I” autobiographical or not? And which aspect of Paul’s life [if it is autobiographical] or some other life [if it is not autobiographical] is in view? Although the first question has recently been resolved by rhetorical analysis, the second has not yet been satisfactorily answered . . . ⁵⁷²

The “immense scholarly debate” Jewett references has seen the “I” of this pericope argued to be Paul, either before or after becoming a Jesus follower, Adam, any follower of Jesus, or a non-Jewish Jesus follower.⁵⁷³ Jewett’s own answer to his two questions is

⁵⁷² Jewett, *Romans*, 441.

⁵⁷³ Jewett provides a fine summary of the various positions on the issue. Jewett, *Romans*, 441-45.

that the “I” represents (1) Paul (2) during his period of persecution of Jesus followers. I disagree. I propose that this “I” is the same interlocutor, last seen in ch. 6 and first met in 2:1, who represents the mind and questions of Paul’s implied audience. To see why requires extensive argument.

Jewett joins most contemporary exegetes in reading vv. 7 to 24 as an example of “speech-in-character,” a mode of address in which the speaker takes on the character of another person, historical or not, fictional or not, to emphasize a point.⁵⁷⁴ Because it allows the author to frame the arguments the listener may have in a way favorable to the argument the author wishes to advance, use of speech-in-character is especially helpful in a work such as Rom. In favor of Jewett’s position that this is Paul speaking as a persecutor of Jesus followers is the fact that there is no indication in the text to suggest to the audience that there has been a change in speaker. The “I” of 7b follows closely on the rhetorical, authorial “we” of 7a. With no other mark, Jewett argues that the audience would simply assume that this is the same character as the speaker of 7a, Paul himself.⁵⁷⁵ Jewett proceeds to read the “I” in the remainder of the chapter as a speech-in-character by “Paul the zealot prior to his conversion.”⁵⁷⁶

Jewett’s formulation must leap the first hurdle of the rhetoric of Rom itself. As I explored in a previous chapter, Rom uses the pedagogical tool of a dialogue with a

⁵⁷⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 443-45. Stanley K. Stowers, “Romans 7.7-25 as a Speech-in-Character (προσωποποιία),” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 180-202. Also Stowers, *Rereading*, 264-69.

⁵⁷⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 445.

⁵⁷⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 445.

character constructed to vocalize the issues of the implied audience. Paul, as we saw, uses this technique as recently as Rom 6 to develop his argument there. Stowers has noted that some of the earliest commentators (Origen, Jerome, and Ambrose among others), all trained in rhetoric, recognized that this section did indeed represent a change in speaker, to one who, unlike Paul, had once lived without the Law (v. 9).⁵⁷⁷ Thus, it was not so clear to the rhetoricians of antiquity that the speaker had remained the same from 7:7a to 7:7b.

Furthermore, Stowers and Troels Engberg-Pedersen have demonstrated that a theme of lack of self-control, ἀκράσία is common enough in Greco-Roman literature and philosophy that it need not be autobiographical.⁵⁷⁸ Roman audiences, Judean or not, Jewish or not, would be sufficiently familiar with the theme that they would not regard it as autobiographical.

From v. 12 on, the speaker acknowledges that *in the present* such lack of self-mastery persists. Paul, however, has spoken at length in ch. 6 about the common experience of being delivered from sin as a consequence of baptism (6: 7-11) and the continuation of that state to the present (vv. 12-25), when Jesus followers have been “freed from sin and enslaved to righteousness” (v. 18). In other words, Paul has assured

⁵⁷⁷ Stowers, *Rereading*, 258-59.

⁵⁷⁸ Stowers, *Rereading*, 260-64. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “The Reception of Graeco-Roman Culture in the New Testament: The Case of Romans 7.7-25,” in *The New Testament as Reception* (eds. M. Müller and H. Tronier; JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 32-57, particularly 54-56. While Stowers and Engber-Pedersen primarily are concerned to demonstrate the congruence of the theme with Greco-Roman culture, it is a theme not foreign to the Jews. The term ἀκράσία appears in *Pss. Sol* 4:3 in the discussion of the hypocrite. Paul uses the term in 1 Cor 7:5 in urging married partners to be generous with marital rights so that neither loses “self-control.” The term appears also at Matt 23:25 in Jesus’ denunciation of scribes and Pharisees for their “self-indulgence” (NRSV).

his audience in ch. 6 that those who have been baptized are specifically not under the dominion of sin. Thus it seems unlikely that the interrogator is speaking as a currently baptized Jesus follower.

Jewett would not dispute this line of argument but holds that in Phil 3:6, Gal 1:13, and 1 Cor 15:9, Paul describes his former life of zealously pursuing, or persecuting, the “Church of God.” Jewett and Engberg-Pedersen then argue that the most likely candidate for the “I” is Paul, commenting on his former way of life from the perspective of a Jesus follower.⁵⁷⁹ Putting his position succinctly, Engberg-Pedersen writes

It may be taken as established that Paul is describing an experience of living under the Mosaic Law as seen from the Christ-believing perspective that he introduces in 8.1. It is one of the very real advances of twentieth-century scholarship to have established this point beyond reasonable doubt, and scholarship should never go back on it. . . . a kind of minimalist interpretation to the effect that the ‘I’ stands for any individual living under the Jewish Law. What the passage describes is the (non-Christ-believing) Jewish experience with the Law -- as seen from Paul’s new (Jewish) Christ-believing perspective.⁵⁸⁰

Needless to say, despite the categorical imperative in Engberg-Pedersen’s dictum, I find others willing to “go back” on this proposition. In his foundationally important work, Stowers concluded that “Paul uses *prosōpopoiia* in chapter 7 to characterize not every human or every human who is not a Christian but rather gentiles, especially those

⁵⁷⁹ Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 243-44. Engberg-Pedersen, “Reception,” 37. Jewett, *Romans*, 443-44.

⁵⁸⁰ Engberg-Pedersen, “Reception,” 37.

who try to live by works of the law.”⁵⁸¹ Stowers makes it clear in this and succeeding sections that by “gentiles” he refers to non-Judean, non-Jewish non-Jesus-followers.⁵⁸²

I agree with Stowers’ further analysis that the “I” cannot refer to a Jew. There is no indication in Rom or any other of Paul’s letters that Paul saw non-Jesus’-following Jews as in any way hypocritical, conscience ridden, or flailing before the Law.⁵⁸³ In ch. 9, Paul depicts Jews who do not follow Jesus as unable to recognize Jesus as messiah due to a deliberate divine act which impairs their powers of discernment. I do not argue that the Jews of Rom 9-11 are sinless, but the condition of ἀκράσια the speaker in ch. 7 describes requires that the individual be aware of the fact of their sinful actions: they cannot do what they claim they want to do.

Tobin, writing with the benefit of work of both Stowers and Engberg-Perdersen, concluded that that the speaker is speaking about the Mosaic Law, as one familiar with both the Greco-Roman and Jewish discussions of desire.⁵⁸⁴ The speaker experienced learning the Law and its pedagogical function as well as its limitations.⁵⁸⁵ Tobin then asks “Of whom is this a description?” and concludes that the description best fits one whom “Paul thinks . . . of the experience of the typical Gentile Roman Christian.”⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸¹ Stowers, *Rereading*, 273.

⁵⁸² Stowers, *Rereading*, 273-76.

⁵⁸³ Stowers, *Rereading*, 273.

⁵⁸⁴ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 228.

⁵⁸⁵ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 228-29.

⁵⁸⁶ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 237.

That is, Tobin sees the interlocutor as one who experienced great difficulty fulfilling the Law *as non-Jew*. In retrospect, the Law acted in a way that could not lead to life but, because of its nature, inevitably led to death.

A rhetorical element that Tobin did not exploit is the continuing identity of an interlocutor in an extended diatribe or dialogue. I have referred a number of times to Thorsteinsson's thesis that absent a clear mark by the author, the interlocutor in an epistolary dialogue remains constant throughout the letter. When I tested this as I proceeded through Rom, it proved a useful insight. The interlocutor in vv. 7-23, then – the "I" of this section – would be identified as the same interlocutor Paul addressed in chs. 2 and 6 and will address again in chapters 14 and 15. Here, the interlocutor reflects on his own experience coming to terms with the Jewish Law. In ch. 2, the interlocutor is identified as a non-Judean who "calls himself a Jew" (2:17). In this ch. 7 we learn that the interlocutor is unable to follow the Law. Throughout Rom, the interlocutor has raised issues concerning Paul's position on the Law. Now the interlocutor has admitted an inability to observe the same Law. Paul's point in Gal discouraging adoption of parts of the Law *without becoming a Jew* is validated in the experience of the interlocutor. In relation to non-Jews, the Law can define Sin (7:7b), and works as a prosecutor to bring death to the individual (7:5). But one must take on the whole Law and become a Jew to have the Law bring life (Gal 5:2-3). Indeed, one might conclude from Rom 8 that Paul believes that non-Judean non-Jews were congenitally unable to maintain the law, for there Paul writes "For the inability of the law, weakened through the flesh" (8:3a) and

“because the intention [φρόνημα] of the flesh is hostility towards God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be” (v.7).⁵⁸⁷

The experience of the interlocutor stands in sharp contrast with the experience of the Law in Rom 7:1-6. In these earlier verses, the law liberates and leads to Christ. The interlocutor’s experience of death as a consequence of learning the Law demonstrates the difficulty of proper behavior outside of the covenant with Abraham, whether entered as a Jew or as a non-Jewish Jesus follower.

The Impact of the Spirit: Rom 7:25a, 8:1-39⁵⁸⁸

Paul transitions from interlocutor to himself to explain why non-Jewish Jesus followers will compose ethically sound communities, the work of Rom 8. This marks Paul’s final response to the question of 6:1, “With this grace abounding and no law binding, is there anything to stop rampant sinning?” From the interlocutor’s monologue in ch. 7 it is clear that the Law alone will not assure ethical behavior by non-Jews who do not follow Jesus. Chapter 8 describes the transformed relationship between the Law and non-Jewish Jesus followers. My translation of the first four verses treating particularly and directly of the Law, are set out below.

⁵⁸⁷ Stowers, *Rereading*, 282.

⁵⁸⁸ Current versions of Rom place 7:25 and 8:1 in different chapters and, hence, moving from one part of the argument to a second. Together they read: ^{7:25}But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, *for I by myself am obedient in [my] mind to the law of God, but in [my] flesh to the law of sin.* ^{8:1}For now there is no condemnation of those in Christ Jesus. (Emphasis added.)

Because the exclamation of thanksgiving in 7:25a flows so well into 8:1, and the italicized portion is better related to the preceding discussion on the inability of non-Jews to obey the Law, many scholars conclude that 7:25b-c is interpolated or misplaced. Jewett, *Romans*, 456-57; 472-73. Excluding these comments from the text (at least at this point in Rom) provides a smooth transition from the discussion by the interlocutor of the impossibility of the non-Jew attempting to live according to the law to a statement of thanksgiving by Paul for the work of Jesus: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For now there is no condemnation of those in Christ Jesus” (7:25a, 8:1).

^{7:25a} Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ^{8:1} There is now no judgment against those in Christ Jesus; ² for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed you from the law of sin and of death. ³ Because of the ineffectualness of the Law, weakened through the flesh, God, having sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh because of sin, condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the Law may be fulfilled among us, those not living according to the flesh, but according to spirit.⁵⁸⁹

In this passage, Paul does not dispute the interlocutor's complaint that the Law cannot give life to non-Jews. Paul's emphasis on the "flesh" (vv. 3, 4 here and in ch. 7), suggests that the problem with non-Jews is that their flesh is imperfect. As a Jew, Paul would find it imperfect because it was not circumcised. Once again, one looks to Gal 5:3 and Paul's statement that the circumcised must follow all of the Law, with the implication that it can be done even if it might be difficult.

The imperfection of non-Jewish flesh was remedied by God sending Jesus Christ and condemning sin in the flesh. With the coming of Christ, non-Jews could take on the spirit and remedy their uncircumcision. Dunn emphasizes that for Paul it is "the gift of the Spirit . . . which provides the new covenant answer to the old covenant circumcision."⁵⁹⁰ In Gal 3:1-5, Paul marks the inception of the new life with the reception of the spirit and contrasts this with the "works of the law," of which the most important must be circumcision.⁵⁹¹ In this way, Paul writes in Rom 8:4, the requirements of the Law, which requirements provide for the entrance of non-Jews into the kingdom of God

⁵⁸⁹ In this translation, there are no changes from what may be found in the majority of scholarly versions. I have not, however, capitalized all references to "law" (νόμος) since the references here are not to the Hebrew Scriptures.

⁵⁹⁰ Dunn, *Theology*, 455.

⁵⁹¹ Dunn, *Theology*, 454-55.

(the point at issue in Rom), were fulfilled among us (that is, among us Jewish Jesus followers), who live according to the spirit and not the flesh, through Jesus Christ.

The repair of non-Jewish flesh by the spirit leads at v. 13 to the affirmation that if “you [plural] slay the deeds of the body, you will live.” Paul declares the consequence of this:

For as many as are led by a spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not again receive a spirit of slavery for fear, but you received a spirit of adoption as a son through which we cry “Abba, Father.” The same spirit witnesses to our spirit, that we are children of God. But if children, also heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, since we suffered, in order that we might be praised. (vv. 14-17)

The spirit of God conquers the flesh through the divine adoption of non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, transforming them into sons of God without the ritual of circumcision. This status of sonship is shared with Jesus Christ (here and Rom 1:4), and with Jews, as set out in the Hebrew Scriptures (Deut 14:1; Ps 28:1; Isa 43:6; Hos 1:10, 2:1) and as confirmed in Rom 9:4. The spirit has raised the status of the non-Jew to that of the Jew.⁵⁹²

In vv.18-23, Paul tells the Romans that as a consequence of the coming of the spirit, all creation, and not just human flesh, will be repaired. At verse 23b, Paul writes that the adoption of the “nation” of non-Jews is incomplete: “we ourselves complain within ourselves, awaiting anxiously adoption, [and] the release of our body [σῶμα, singular].” Jewett writes of this:

⁵⁹² One of the corollaries from this reading of ch.8 is to question the notion that Paul sees either a spirit-flesh or spirit-law antinomy in this chapter. As I read this chapter, weakened flesh is repaired by the infusion of the spirit so as to be able to fulfill the Law. Note that the provisions of the Law for the non-Jew are not identical to provisions for the Jew.

Paul does not hope for “redemption from the body,” or as the peculiar singular reference to “body” seems to suggest, for a resurrection of the body in some individualistic sense of being detached from the creation and its corruptibility, but for a socially transformed corporeality within the context of a transformed creation that is no longer subject to “corruption.”⁵⁹³

This represents the culmination of a subtle shift by Paul in his pronouns. I remarked that in v. 2 Paul refers to “you,” singular, the interlocutor from ch. 7. In v. 4 Paul uses “us” referring to the Jews who are witnessing the incoming of the non-Jews. In v. 23, however, “we” can refer not only to Jews but also to non-Jewish Jesus followers, all of whom now look for the day when all creation is restored.

This analysis has focused on the role of the spirit in the life of non-Jews, but it is clear that the spirit of God is a familiar force among Jews as well. The Psalms speak of creation by the breath of God (Psa 33:6), God’s spirit renewing the earth (104:30). Job declares “The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4 NRSV). Wisdom 1 provides an especially interesting use of spirit:

³For perverse counsels separate people from God, and his power, put to the proof, rebukes the foolhardy; ⁴Because into a soul that plots evil wisdom does not enter, nor does she dwell in a body under debt of sin. ⁵For the holy spirit of discipline flees deceit and withdraws from senseless counsels and is rebuked when unrighteousness occurs . . . ⁷For the spirit of the LORD fills the world, is all-embracing, and knows whatever is said. (Wis 1:3-5, 7 NAB).

All of these uses find a parallel in Rom 8. In addition, one may note the identification of the “spirit of discipline” in Wis, a type or form or function of the spirit like the spirits of slavery and adoption. Also, I previously discussed how Torah, the Law, and wisdom had been conflated by certain Jewish writers. The conflation in Wis of wisdom and spirit

⁵⁹³ Jewett, *Romans*, 519.

means that there doubtless were Jews who would equate the spirit in Rom 8 with the Law, following the equation Law = wisdom = spirit. If that equation worked in the minds of the Romans, then they could understand that when non-Jewish Jesus followers were filled with the spirit of the Lord, they were filled with the Law, though the provisions of the Law might not be the same for non-Jews and Jews. Non-Jewish Jesus follower share the one spirit with Jewish Jesus followers and all are adopted children of God, one through Abraham and the other through Abraham and Christ.

While most commentators focus on the global ethical implications of chs. 6-8 for a generic Jesus follower, I read this unit as Paul addressing whether his gospel to non-Judean, non-Jews will result in anarchy among Jesus followers. He deliberately conjured up the stereotypical idolatrous fornicating non-Judean non-Jew in 1:19-32. Jews understand that non-Judean non-Jews are subject to the Law but without becoming a Jew are hard-pressed to observe its commandments, even when they recognize its sovereignty. Hence the question: if they cannot keep the Law how can Jews be in communion with them? In these three chapters, Paul dramatizes this situation, but also characterizes the Law as that which liberates from bondage and brings non-Jews to Christ. In Rom 1:1-5, Paul has shown the link between the Law and Christ. In ch. 7 Paul asserts that the Law brings non-Judean non-Jews to baptism, to a new spirit, and to divine adoption.

In large measure, this completes Paul's *apologia* of the implications of his gospel for non-Jews. Paul's theme in Rom is the righteousness of God, towards Jews first and then towards non-Jews (1:16-18), and he has devoted most of the first eight chapters to

the place of non-Jews in God's scheme. In his mind, their adoption as children of God displays the righteousness of a God who fulfilled both the promises to Abraham to be the father of many nations, and the prophetic oracles of an incoming of the nations to the God of Israel. Doubtless, his audience understood that Jews had priority in the divine plan, so that the omission of any discussion of Jews would not have caused anxiety. Unaccounted for, however, have been those Jews who did not choose to follow Jesus. How do the power, righteousness, and wrath of God apply to them? Reading chs. 6-8 as concerned with the relation of non-Jews to Jews maintains a focus on the "ethnic" character of Rom and leads naturally to the discussion of this latter group, the subject of Rom 9-11.

Rom 10:4 and the Τέλος of the Law

Crucial to understanding Paul's relationship to the Law is Rom 10:4: τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, that the NRSV translates "For Christ is the end of the law so that here may be righteousness for everyone who believes." Because of the ambiguity of both τέλος in the Greek and "end" in English translations, scholars are left to wonder whether (a) Paul is proclaiming that the coming of Christ marks the termination of the Law or (b) that Christ is the goal, the fulfillment of the Law. The translation and interpretation have repercussions in the real world, as the former interpretation reinforces a supersessionist doctrine that the Religion of Israel and Judaism have been replaced by Christianity, while the latter preserves an image of Jesus

followers as step-siblings through Abraham with Jews.⁵⁹⁴ While the latter is a desirable objective, its verisimilitude must be demonstrated.

I have concluded that indeed Paul should be understood to say “Christ is the fulfillment of the Law,” and the Law continues in force for Jesus followers. To appreciate the rationale of my argument, let me return to the thought experiment that opens ch. 3. In that experiment, I explored how my executor might reconstruct the implied audience based on what I have said, or did not say on topics. In the present instance, of the two options for understanding Rom 10:4 if Paul is writing to a community of Jesus followers telling them that the Law has been terminated, one might conclude that Paul considers the audience to be composed of persons who do not follow the Law anyway. Since law, νόμος, is an important identity marker, an audience unconcerned with the Law may safely be considered to be non-Jewish Jesus followers. Paul, writing to secure their assistance in his work, assures them that they need not be concerned with observing the Law. On the other hand, if Paul meant to say that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law, one concludes that Paul expects the audience to be concerned about the Law and its continuation. Those who best fit this description are Jewish Jesus followers. Thus, the proper understanding of Paul’s intent in Rom 10:4 serves as a final test of the thesis that Paul’s implied audience for his letter to Rome is composed of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

⁵⁹⁴ Here I use the term Christianity because I am convinced that in Paul’s time, at any rate, this doctrine would have had little purchase.

Romans 10:4 within Romans 9-11

I discussed Paul's use of Scripture in Rom 9-11 in ch. 3. There I commented on Paul's way of arguing in these chapters – his use of characters and narratives from the Torah unfamiliar to non-Jewish Romans and his use of Scriptures in a very Jewish way. Paul in these three chapters treats of Jews who do not follow Jesus and those Jews who, while following Jesus, disagree with Paul's gospel. After expressing undying love for them (even allowing that he is willing to be sacrificed to bring any to be followers of Jesus [9:3]), Paul seems to digress, speaking of the instances in the scriptures in which God chooses what appears a capricious path in the history of Israel: choosing the second born Jacob over Esau; hardening Pharaoh's heart; "having mercy on whomever he chooses" (vv. 7-18). Paul then chastises those who would ask that God follow a straighter path in the divine plan (vv. 19-29). This section and line of thought is capped in 9:30-31 when Paul poses the question I paraphrase (NA²⁷ shown below):

“What are we to think about the fact that non-Judean non-Jews, who had no idea that God had plans for bringing them into God's household, became children of God through the faithfulness of Christ, but Israel, pursuing the same goal of bringing non-Jews into God's household but through the Law, did not succeed?”

³⁰Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκονται δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως, ³¹Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν.

In this interpretation, the verses demonstrate that God's seemingly arbitrary election of persons to carry out the divine plan, particularly the divine plan to fulfill the progenerative promises to Abraham, has continued with the action of the faithfulness of Christ. This interpretation is resisted by scholars who read these verses as referring instead to the inability of both Jews and non-Jews to be righteous, to follow the

provisions of the Law.⁵⁹⁵ My paraphrase is inspired by and relies on Stowers' work showing that δικαιοσύνη (usually, "righteousness") is Paul's shorthand in Rom for "God's righteousness made manifest in his plan to fulfill the promise to make Abraham the father of many nations."⁵⁹⁶

Δικαιοσύνη appears an inordinate number of times in Rom, 34 of Paul's 49 uses in all letters. Hence, it is logical to assume that the term is somehow linked with the larger theme of God's dealing with non-Judean non-Jews. Stephen Westerholm notes that δικαιοσύνη is the regularly used scriptural term relating to a judgment about whether the actions of people, including God, are in accord with God's laws and justice.⁵⁹⁷ It first appears in the thematic verse 1:17: "for the righteousness of God [δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ] is revealed in it [i.e., in Paul's gospel] from faithfulness to faithfulness, as it is written 'the righteous one [ὁ δίκαιος] lives out of faithfulness.'" It is clear that the "righteousness of God" has reference to God's plan for the salvation of those to whom Paul preaches, non-Judean non-Jews. Very similar uses of the noun appear in 3:21-26 and 4:9-13. In the former, Paul is speaking of the "righteousness of God" manifested "apart from the Law" through the "faithfulness of Jesus Christ for the benefit of non-Jewish Jesus' followers" (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας). The appearance in 4:11 describes the "righteousness of Abraham" that led to his becoming the father of

⁵⁹⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 608-10.

⁵⁹⁶ Stowers, *Rereading*, 306-09.

⁵⁹⁷ Stephen Westerholm, "The Righteousness of the Law and the Righteousness of Faith in Romans," *Int* 58, no. 3 (2004): 253-64, here 254.

many nations; here again, δικαιοσύνη refers to the way of salvation for non-Jews. This evidence helps point to a connotation of righteousness as referring to the divine plan for the salvation of non-Judean non-Jews.

Thus, at 9:30-31, the conclusion of the “digression” on God’s surprising decisions, Paul makes the point that indeed God’s plan for non-Judean non-Jews defies human logic. The flow of ch. 9 then becomes clear. Paul opens with praise for Jews: all Jews. Paul reminds the audience, however, that Israel’s history contains many instances when God exercised the divine prerogative to unsettle human wisdom. Paul claims God has chosen to do so again in Paul’s own time, when the faithfulness of Jesus, and not adoption of the practice of the Law, became the route for non-Jews to be admitted to the family of Abraham. Jews who do not recognize this plan, whether Jesus followers or not, are mistaken about the need for non-Jews to become Jews (v. 32). Jews who did not recognize this “stumbled” over the Christ event, over a Jew whose faithfulness to the God of Israel extended even to his death on behalf of non-Jews (v. 33).

Paul continues this theme into ch. 10, repeating his solidarity with Jews (v. 1), complimenting them on their holy zeal (ζήλος θεοῦ), but (vv. 2-3) charging them with ignorance (οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν) and insubordination towards God’s plan (τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν) for wishing to impose the law on non-Jewish Jesus followers. Gager emphasizes this ignorance of God’s plan in his comments on these verses. He writes:

It is not that they [Jews] failed to pursue righteousness (9:31) or lacked zeal for God (10:2), but their zeal was unenlightened and that they did not submit to God’s righteousness. How? Again, as the context reveals, by their failure to

recognize Paul's gospel to and about the Gentiles as fully at one with God's righteousness.

... "Based on works" is thus to be seen as a compressed reference to Paul's underlying rejection of the Jewish insistence that Gentiles must still enter the covenant community through obedience to the commandments of Moses.⁵⁹⁸

Eisenbaum emphasizes the eschatological setting of Paul's judgment, complementing these arguments. She comments that these Jews are ignorant of "what time it is."⁵⁹⁹ The time has come for the gathering of the nations, and God has chosen Paul to announce the gospel of the faithfulness of Christ to bring that about.

Paul Claims Jesus is the Goal and Fulfillment of the Law: Rom 10:4

Romans 10:4 is the consummation of this argument. My translation and the Greek are shown below.

For the goal of the Law is Christ for [fulfilling] the righteousness [of God] for all the non-Judean Jews.

τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

Paul draws together Law and Christ's saving faithfulness in this verse, claiming that this was the point of the Law all along as regards to non-Judean Jews.

This interpretation depends on understanding the phrase πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ("each one who is faithful") as a Pauline shorthand for non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers – the subjects of Paul's missionary activity. The phrase appears first in 1:16 where Paul's gospel is said to have power for salvation to "all who believe" (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι). Here the referent clearly is to one to whom Paul has been called to preach his gospel,

⁵⁹⁸ Gager, *Origins*, 250.

⁵⁹⁹ Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian*, 252.

namely non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers. The phrase appears again at 3:22 and 4:11b. In 3:22 it again refers to those with trust in Jesus Christ. In 4:11b the phrase, as it is in 1:16, clearly refers to non-Jews: “. . . in order that he [Abraham] might be the ancestor of all who are faithful through uncircumcision” (. . . πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι’ ἀκροβυστίας). As we have seen, one of Paul’s objectives in Rom 4 was to demonstrate that the promise to Abraham to be the father of many nations came while Abraham was not circumcised, therefore not a Jew in the 1st century understanding of that identity. In this context, the reference to “all the faithful,” clearly references non-Jews. A parallel use of the phrase occurs in 1 Thes 1:7: “so you may be an example to all who are faithful [πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν] in Macedonia and Achaia,” a reference that would include the Pauline communities in Philippi and Corinth, both composed of non-Jewish Jesus followers.⁶⁰⁰

Westerholm argues that πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων refers to all people, Jews and non-Jews, and not just to non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers, the subjects of Paul’s missionary activity as I claim.⁶⁰¹ Westerholm writes that in Rom 3 Paul holds that no one is capable of meeting the moral obligations of the Mosaic Law, and therefore no one is righteous (Rom 3:9-20).⁶⁰² If no one is righteous, then God’s justice and righteousness would be compromised by a judgment of righteousness on anyone since all are sinners

⁶⁰⁰ Besides Rom and 1 Thes, the phrase πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων is found only in the Johannine tradition (John 3:15-16; 12:46; 1 John 5:1) in the NT.

⁶⁰¹ Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith,” 253-64.

⁶⁰² Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith,” 259-60.

(Deut 16:19, 25:1; Sir 9:12).⁶⁰³ Westerholm continues by pointing out that this righteousness of sinners is exactly, however, what Paul claims to have occurred at Rom 4:5: “But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness” (NRSV).⁶⁰⁴ Righteousness of sinners occurred without violating God’s righteousness because the punishment of sinners was redirected from them to Jesus Christ who exhausted God’s wrath “when he died as an atoning sacrifice.”⁶⁰⁵ If Westerholm’s reading were sustained, then Rom 10:4 describes the termination of the Law and the supersession of Christianity over Judaism.⁶⁰⁶

Objections to this interpretation begin with recalling that in Paul’s discussion of Judaism there is never a statement that the Law is not efficacious for Jews or that Jews cannot meet their obligations under the Law. Jews, Paul affirms, are sinners and that makes them unrighteous, but, as members of the covenant, Jews are beneficiaries of the divine gifts, “the adoption [into the covenant], the glory [presence of God], the giving of the Law, the worship, and the promises” (Rom 9:4). I find no intimation by Paul that, despite God’s predilection for apparently arbitrary decisions (9:7 ff.), these gifts have been recalled. Indeed, making such a statement flies in the face of Paul’s insistence on

⁶⁰³ Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith,” 255.

⁶⁰⁴ Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith,” 262.

⁶⁰⁵ Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith,” 263.

⁶⁰⁶ Since all were sinners, incapable of observing the Law, and Christ’s atonement worked to justify all, Westerholm finds no reason for the continuation of the rituals and sacrifices of the Mosaic Law: the religion of Israel and Judaism have been superseded. He writes: “Paul could not have believed that the Mosaic provisions for atonement remained in effect once Christ had died for the sins of humankind.” While the rituals and identity markers of Judaism were annulled, somehow the moral dictates of the Law survived, continuing to define “what is ‘righteous’ . . . (Rom 6).” Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith,” 264.

the righteousness of God, Paul's respect for Peter's gospel to the circumcised (Gal 2:7-8; cf. 1 Cor 1:12,3:22), and an argument from silence: nowhere does Paul claim that those who become Jews will lose "life" (Gal 5:2-4). Hence, Paul gives no reason for concluding that he believes that the temple sacrifices and other means for atoning for sins are nullified.

One cannot help but suspect that to arrive at that conclusion, Westerholm leaps from "solution to plight:" if the solution is atonement by Jesus Christ, then the plight must have been universal, including both Jews and non-Jews and the inclusion of Jews implies the nullification of the temple system.⁶⁰⁷ To be sure, there is nothing in Rom to preclude the Christ event being efficacious for Jews, but (a) there is also nothing that requires it and (b) an explanation that the Christ event was meant to bring life to non-Jews economically preserves Paul's affirmation of God's righteousness to Israel and to God's promises to Abraham before he was a Jew. This explanation does not deny the graciousness of God who freely offers a covenantal relationship to Jews through Abraham and to non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. In both cases, the human is still required to be righteous by doing righteous deeds and will be judged by those deeds. Now, with the Spirit of God in their flesh, non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers have the chance to accomplish that.

Romans 10:4, in this reading, is Paul's sound bite summary of this situation for the Roman audience. The Law has not been terminated for them or for the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers of Paul's communities. Paul has shown that the Law, with its

⁶⁰⁷ Westerholm, "The Righteousness of the Law and of Faith," 262.

narratives of seemingly arbitrary election of second born, illustrates the freedom with which God enters into covenants with humans and provides the precedent for the current election of non-Judean non-Jews through the faithfulness of Jesus. Since Christ was prophesied by the Law (Rom 1:2), fulfilled the promises to Abraham in the Law (ch. 4), and since through the Law the non-Judean non-Jew is led to baptism in Christ (7:4), Christ is the point, τέλος, of the Law.

The remainder of Rom 10 uses proof texts for this stance, as shown in ch. 3 of this work. To summarize the argument of 10:5-21, vv. 5-10 conclude with a creedal statement that anyone who does believe in and confess Christ will be saved. While Paul does not use the phrase πᾶς ὁ πιστευων here, the prominence of the phrase throughout the letter makes it clear that non-Jews are the primary referent. That is, such a person does not require the Law to be justified. Paul goes on to explain in v. 11 that no one will be ashamed who is faithful to Christ, and in v. 12 Paul says why this is so: there is no distinction between a Jew, one who follows the whole of the Law, and a Greek who is faithful to Christ. They join together in calling upon the one God of Israel (cf. Joel 2:32) (Rom 10:13). This reference to “shame” and the references to Jew and Greek echo Paul’s thematic statement in 1:16. Paul returns to the theme of reversal in vv. 19-21 with the quotation from Deut 32:21. As in ch. 9, the non-Jews do not understand (ἀσυνέτος in both Deut and Rom) what was done on their behalf but it is accomplished nevertheless.

In none of this is there a sense that the Law is no longer efficacious. Indeed, Paul is proof-texting his gospel using the Law. Of course, Paul chastises both “Jews and Greeks” for not following all the provisions of the Law (2:17 ff). Deliverance for Greeks

comes through the faithfulness of Christ. That is the point of Rom and Gal: Christ works for non-Jews. Paul intimates that he believes the Law and the temple system work for Jews, but that is not really his concern. This reading of the Law is most consistent with an audience of Jewish Jesus followers, whether Judean or not.

Not only does the content of this section point to such an audience, Paul's eirenic style also does. We should realize that Paul is critiquing any Jews who believe that the only way for non-Jews to be saved is to become "righteous from the Law," to become Jews, rather than to be righteous from the faithfulness of Jesus. Thus Paul's critique covers both Jews who do not follow Jesus and Jewish Jesus followers, whether Judean or non-Judean. Paul encountered some of the latter group among the Teachers in Galatia and his opponents in Philippi. Paul's language in Phil is startling in its invective: "Watch out for the dogs! Watch out for those doing evil things. Watch out for the mutilation" (Phil 3:2). In Gal, Paul questions the reputations of the "so-called leaders" (ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων [Gal 2:6]), prayed that the Teachers castrate themselves (5:12), and questioned their motivation ("so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" [6:12]). In comparison, in Rom Paul seems to go out of his way to express his allegiance to these same people – an allegiance that leads him to swear his sorrowful willingness to be destroyed by Christ on their behalf (9:3). Did Paul mellow? A more likely thesis is that the audience changed: Paul was no longer speaking to non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, but to non-Judean, Jewish Jesus followers, concerned about their fellow co-religionists.

In this reading, then, Jesus Christ is not the terminus of the Law, rather the Law is fulfilled in Christ. The Law continues in effect for both Jews and non-Jewish Jesus followers. The careful explanation of his gospel, resulting in Rom 10:4, provides additional support to the contention that Paul envisioned an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers for his letter to Rome.

Conclusion

For Paul, the response of Jesus followers to the faithfulness of Christ has to be somehow related to the Law, the guide to behavior. Christ's faithfulness leads to acknowledgment of the authority of the Law in the life of the non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus follower. In writing to the Romans, Paul is explaining how his communities of non-Jewish Jesus followers relates to Jews including Jewish Jesus followers. An important part of that definition is the role of the law in the life of the individual and the community of Jesus followers. My study of Paul concludes that Paul believed that non-Jews were subject to the Law from the beginning, attested in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the fact of death that afflicts humanity as a consequence of sin. It is not that non-Jews are expected to do the "works of the Law," those features of the Mosaic Law binding on Jews and by which Jews maintain their position within the Sinaitic covenant. Non-Jewish Jesus followers are to be bound to all the Law given before Abraham became a Jew. That Law is expressed not only in the Noahide covenants but also in the Adam story and the other material in Gen 1-16. Thus non-Jews are expected to live as Abraham did, and to rely in faithfulness on the God of Israel as did Hagar (Gen 16:13-15).

I have referred a number of times to the criteria for describing the situation in the Church of Rome proposed by Wedderburn: that the reading be consistent with the known history of the community; that the reading be consistent with what is known of other communities; and the reading be consistent with the text itself. This chapter has shown the consistency possible when reading Paul's discussions of the Law in Rom as a letter written seeking assistance from non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers, a group continuing to be Law observant. Paul does not argue that the Law is evil or that Christ has superseded it. Instead, Paul's concern is to demonstrate to the audience that his gospel of the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Christ is part of the divine plan for the salvation of non-Jews. The surprising part of the plan – as surprising as the election of Jacob over Esau – is that non-Jews need not become Jews to be saved.

Writing a traditional commentary on Rom imposes on the author the discipline of producing a coherent reading of the whole of the letter starting with verse 1:1 and going to the conclusion. For that reason, reading a commentary provides the reader a sense of the coherence of the author's assumptions and analyses throughout the text. In this work, however, the sense of the coherence of my reading may be less evident since my analysis has been thematic rather than chronological. To demonstrate the coherence of my reading, in my next chapter, I produce a summary overview of the whole of Paul's letter to the Romans, starting with 1:1 and reading through ch. 16. It will be the final demonstration of the power and coherence of my reading of the letter to an audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

CHAPTER FIVE: A READING OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

In the first four chapters of this work, I have proceeded thematically, demonstrating the way specific reading strategies illuminate the implied audience for Rom. The advantage of this way of studying the text is that author and reader may concentrate on one methodology at a time. The disadvantage is that it is practically impossible to grasp the movement and development Paul achieved in this letter. This chapter is intended to remedy, in part, this disadvantage. Here, I propose a synchronic reading of Rom, beginning with my reconstruction of the situation Paul faced and then proceeding through the letter from Rom 1:1 to 16:27.

There are two caveats. First of all, this is not a detailed verse by verse reading of the text, but closer to a paragraph by paragraph reading. A close reading of many passages is included in earlier chapters. Secondly, I do not intend to break new ground in this chapter, but rather to rely on the analysis and conclusions from the preceeding chapters. In a sense, this reading is the final test of my reconstruction of the implied audience: am I able to produce a coherent reading of Rom with an implied audience of non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers.

Paul's Situation

After a decade on the road, Paul is in Corinth's port city of Cenchrae, preparing for his next major initiative, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem carrying a financial collection to

the community of Jesus followers there. With some satisfaction, Paul might reflect on the success of his work in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, in the cities of Philippi, Thessaloniki, Athens, and metropolitan Corinth. On the other hand, his work with the communities in Asia Minor, in Antioch and Galatia for instance, while marked with initial success has more recently turned sour. From a distance of two millenia, we cannot be certain, but it is not a stretch to mark these communities as now antagonistic towards Paul. The fact that these are the very communities he must pass on the overland route to Jerusalem means he must anticipate scant hospitality from them in his planning. Moreover, the community of Jesus followers in Jerusalem may also be antagonistic to Paul.

Then, in the face of this antagonism, why does Paul persist in his desire to make this hazardous journey? Put simply, it's his job – more precisely his vocation. He is the Apostle of Christ Jesus to non-Judean non-Jews, and it is his responsibility to maintain fellowship between these Jesus followers and more Torah observant Judean Jewish Jesus followers. His pact with the powers-that-be in Jerusalem early in his missionary career included his promise to bring to the community of Jerusalem an offering from his new followers for their support. In this, he would mimic the annual offering for the support of the temple in Jerusalem from Diaspora Jews. Paul realizes, however, that just because his intentions are admirable, his visit to Jerusalem could fan flames of antagonism towards him.

Whence this antagonism? We cannot be certain but it is probably that the letter to Galatia has been used against Paul. Paul now rues the day he sent his letter off. Why

didn't he take the time to read that letter just one more time? Then he might have clarified his thinking on how non-Jewish and Jewish Jesus followers relate to each other, how Abraham becomes the father of both groups, and how the Law works for Jews but not for impaired non-Judean non-Jews; how it is Christ Jesus who has brought them into the kingdom of God.

Paul has one more community who might be willing to support his work, ironically a community he has never visited, the community of Jesus followers in Rome. While in Greater Corinth, Paul has had communication with a number of friends and acquaintances who immigrated from the East to Rome over the years, including Prisca and Aquila who now host a community of Jesus followers in their home. While the Roman community is rooted in the Judean Jewish community there, and so inclined to accept the harsh assessments of Paul's teaching that have come from others, the presence of these Pauline sympathizers gives Paul some hope that the communities of Rome could be persuaded to support his efforts.

But how can Paul do that? His own time is occupied with the preparations for the trip and his role as elder to the community in Corinth. Besides, recognizing that his own efforts must come after the presentation in Rome of his opponents view, Paul is leery that a personal appearance would stir the flames against him, no matter how skillful his oratory.

In a moment of inspiration, Paul approached his patron, Phoebe, the leader of the community in Cenchrae, and a woman of some means, to carry his message to Rome. Sending a woman to Macedonia or Galatia as an ambassador would be unthinkable, but

Rome, with a more egalitarian attitude towards women, surely would welcome her. There are other reasons to expect she would be well received. For one thing, Paul is aware of a number of women who have taken leadership roles in Rome – Prisca, Mary, Junia, and Julia to name a few. For another, as a successful manager of her affairs, Phoebe will evoke respect from the practical Romans and can be counted on to judge the best way to secure support for Paul’s mission to Jerusalem. With Phoebe’s agreement in hand, Paul set out to write his letter. This time he would be careful to explain himself fully. And so he began.

The Letter of Paul to the Romans

Paul opens his letter carefully and diplomatically. In the first 18 verses, Paul presents himself to these Romans as a slave, an apostle of a gospel to the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers grounded in the Jewish prophets of a Christ descended from the great King David, eager to spend time with them. Paul declares the heart of his gospel: the righteousness of the one God of Israel, that has been extended to non-Judean, non-Jewish Jesus followers, works evenhandedly on Jew and non-Jew, for salvation or wrath.

Paul seamlessly moves to consider the Jewish stereotype of the idolatrous, fornicating non-Judean non-Jew, quintessentially the object of the wrath of God. It is a move designed to win Paul the confidence of his audience and, like the moves of an All-Star point guard, it does more than that. It sets up Paul’s next move, indeed a series of moves. While Jews are aware of God’s wrath on stereotypical non-Judean non-Jews, both their own experience and the literature of their ancestors show that not all non-Judean non-Jews are worthy of divine wrath: God’s own righteousness requires that non-

stereotypical non-Judean non-Jews be treated well. Furthermore, the dark passages of Israel's history often have been interpreted as the wrath of God visited upon his people for their lapses into idolatry. With that background in mind, Paul then switches his focus, at the beginning of ch. 2, from the stereotypical non-Judean non-Jew to an imaginary dialogue partner, an interlocutor who will voice the concerns of the audience.

Before speaking for the audience, however, the interlocutor undergoes an accusatory interrogation from Paul. How well does the interlocutor measure up to the standards by which he judges these non-Judean non-Jews? Can he indeed condemn these people whom he accuses when he himself has committed serious offenses? Can he dare teach the nations when he himself has not met the standards of behavior of a circumcised Jew while others have done so?

If God judges righteousness by deeds and not by status, asks the interlocutor, then what is the value of circumcision? Indeed, what is the value of being a Jew at all? Put another way, what is the value of being a descendant of Abraham? These questions dominate the dialogue of Rom 3-4. Paul affirms the value of being a Jew, and in 3:21 ff. clarifies his gospel: the righteousness of God, as attested by the Law and prophets, has been set forth apart from the Law for all the non-Judean non-Jews through the faithfulness of Christ. These are sinners whose sins God has reckoned, but God will now pass over the sins because of the action of Jesus.

The interrogator asks whether non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus followers have a right to boast about their condition (v. 27), and Paul affirms that it was not their works but the faithfulness of Jesus Christ that has established their righteousness. The one God of Jew

and non-Jew has made righteous Jews from faithfulness and the non-Jew through the faithfulness of Christ. Then the interrogator asks the perceptive question, “[If all of that is true] then why do we say that we found Abraham our forefather according to the flesh?” (4:1). Was it not on the basis of his works that Abraham is our forefather? Paul has set up the opportunity to contextualize his discussion of Abraham in Gal for the benefit of the Romans. Paul’s basic argument is that God’s promise to Abraham to be father of many nations (Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-6) preceeded his circumcision (17:1-14), and thus preceeded his transformation from a non-Judean non-Jew to a non-Judean Jew, the same transformation undergone by the Roman audience. Indeed, Abraham received the symbol of circumcision, becoming a Jew, as the mark of the righteousness that is his due based on his faithfulness while he was uncircumcised. Now Paul can make his claim about Abraham: Abraham’s faithfulness while uncircumcised (Rom 4:11), and his subsequent faithfulness to the covenant (accepting circumcision and procreating Isaac) allowed him to become the father of *both* Jews *and* non-Jews who have come to the worship of the God of Israel. As it is written, “I have made you father of many people” (Rom 4:17; Gen 17:5). Just as Abraham’s unwaivering faithfulness, though his body was long past normal child-rearing age, led to his becoming the father of many, Christ’s faithfulness, leading to his death on account of the sinfulness of non-Jews, led to his being raised for the sake of non-Jews’ righteousness.

Paul explores some of the consequences in ch. 5. First of all, since Jesus’ faithfulness has brought non-Jewish Jesus followers into Abraham’s lineage all Jesus followers are reconciled in God (5:1-2). “All of us, Jews and non-Jews,” Paul says

“experience the benefit of this reconciliation.” In vv. 1-11, Paul uses first person plural pronouns to stress this common family. But in v. 12, Paul’s language changes from the first person to third person as Paul explains the prior religious history of non-Jews and that Jesus established their righteousness. Paul asserts that from the time of Adam until the coming of the Law death reigned. Paul implies that thereafter the Law reigned over all peoples. Non-Jews, not aware of the Law, would then be subject to the wrath of God. Jesus’ gratuitous act of righteousness rendered them righteous, deemed worthy of eternal life.

Paul deliberately uses hyperbole at the end of ch. 5, characterizing God’s graciousness as abounding where sin also abounded. This sets up the interrogator’s next question to open ch. 6, which I paraphrase “If God’s grace abounds where sin abounds, shouldn’t we wallow in sin in order that we might wallow in God’s grace?” (6:1). So Paul is brought to the next critical point in his argument: how can Jewish and non-Jewish Jesus followers stand in the same community if non-Jews do not follow the Law? Thus Paul is brought to the three chapter discussion (chs. 6-8) of the source of the righteous life among the non-Judean non-Jewish followers of Jesus. Paul describes their movement through baptism to union with Christ in his death and resurrection (6:4-11). Baptism transforms the neophyte from a slave of sin to a slave of God, just as baptism and circumcision transform the non-Judean idolater into a non-Judean Jew. United with Jesus, the non-Judean non-Jewish Jesus follower is no longer a slave to sin but, just as Jesus is, becomes a slave to God’s righteousness (vv. 15-23).

What part in this does the Law play? Chapter 7, directed expressly to Romans knowledgeable in the Law, explains how the Law works to liberate Jews. Paul insists that the Law is holy, efficacious as long as one lives, and leads to Jesus (7:1-6). The non-Judean interlocutor who claims to be a Jew expounds the impossibility of maintaining the Law when one is neither a Jew nor a Jesus follower (vv. 15-23).

Paul explains (Rom 7:25, 8:1 ff.) how God sent Jesus, his own son, to “condemn the sin in the flesh” (8:3), to conquer the power of sin and allow his followers to walk in the Spirit. Those who walk in the Spirit, Paul tells the Romans, are children of God (v. 13), just as much as are the Jews. In ways not fully explained, Paul claims that Jesus has in some way repaired the flesh of non-Judean non-Jews who become Jesus followers. However it happens, they are now children of God and as God’s children the brothers and sisters of the non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers in Rome. Paul ends this section with a nearly ecstatic exclamation: “For I have been persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor temporal authorities, neither powers present nor in the future, neither heights nor depth, nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our lord” (8:38-39).

On the note of love of God arising from the Spirit, Paul largely concludes his defense of bringing non-Judean non-Jews into the fellowship of Jesus followers and moves to address a new question: where in Paul’s gospel do the Jews stand who do not recognize Jesus as Christ? Now Paul protests his love and respect for all Jews, whether Jesus followers or not, who have inherited the fruits of the promises bestowed on Abraham (9:1-4). But Paul is hard pressed to explain why these Jews have not recognized

Jesus as Christ. In the end Paul asserts they are overcome by a hardness of heart reminiscent of the hardness of heart God imposed on Pharaoh. As with the case of Pharaoh, this latter day hardness of heart is designed to display the glory of God, divine mercy to the non-Judean non-Jews (9:19-33). Things will not end with Israel as they did with Pharaoh, for Paul insists that “all Israel,” that is all Jews, will be saved (11:26). They are, after all, “beloved account of their ancestors” (v. 28). Nor should non-Judean Jewish Jesus followers consider themselves superior to them for, after all, non-Judean non-Jews are dependent on the religion of Israel for sustenance (10:13-20).

How could these diverse peoples, affected as they must be by stereotypes of each other, possibly form a community? Romans 12-15 provides Paul’s teaching on rules for the community. The prime principle: to adopt the mind of God, who has manifested mercy to this community (12:1-2). Each person brings to the community a special gift to add to the body of Christ (vv. 5-8).

Following the general exhortation of ch. 12, Paul answers any critics who claim that his record of conflict with civil authorities renders his gospel suspect. Here in ch. 13 Paul exhorts the Romans to follow the directives of the temporal authorities that are, claims Paul, given this authority by God (13:1-7). Then, once more, Paul returns to the theme of love, restating the commandment of Lev 19:18 to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Rom 13:9).

In antiquity as today, religious communities shared meals. Food fights, disagreements over what might be consumed, certainly arose in the early communities of Jesus followers. In Rom 14-15 Paul urges both those who find all foods acceptable and

those who would exclude certain foods to adapt their practices to avoid giving scandal. The rationale for this behavior (as in the parallel teaching regarding the choice of sabbath days), is the proposition that God has received both factions (14:3). In forming a community with diverse people, the Romans are urged to follow Christ who “formed a partnership [προσελάβετο] with you for the sake of the truth of God” (15:7); or, as Paul stated in the opening of ch. 12, to take on the mind of God.

At 15:14, Paul begins to wind down his letter, beginning with more praise of the Romans (“ . . . you also are filled with goodness, having been filled with all knowledge, capable also to admonish each other” [15:14]) and reminding them that now his long held hope to visit Rome is about to be fulfilled on his way to Spain and after his upcoming trip to Jerusalem (v. 23-29). And the point of the letter: to join Paul in his ministry, explicitly in prayer (vv. 30-33) and implicitly in any way that Phoebe, whom Paul commends (16:1-2), might discern.

As is common in letters, Paul asks to be remembered to members of the community with whom he has previously worked. Not only is Paul polite in this, he also implicitly calls upon these same co-workers to serve as personal character witnesses. They can provide affirmations of Paul’s competency and sincerity to any still skeptical in the audience.

After politic greetings from others in Paul’s community in Corinth/Cenchrae, Paul closes with a typical if brief benediction (16:24), and Tertius, scribe for the apostle to the nations, lays down his pen on Paul’s letter to the Romans.

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APPENDIX A: COMPARISON OF PAUL’S USE OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN ROMANS AND IN HIS OTHER UNDISPUTED LETTERS

Introduction

Since one of the objectives of Paul in Romans is to establish his self-identity with the Roman audience, one of the rhetorical strategies that he employed was to maximize the use of “we,” “us,” and “our” in the letter, in comparison with both “I,” “me,” and “my” and “you.” As reported in ch. 3, Paul’s use throughout his letters of the first person singular pronouns and adjectives exceeds the use of either the first person plural or second person (singular or plural) pronouns and pronomial adjectives. It is, therefore, in Paul’s relative use of the pronouns that I am concerned.

I began with a simple count of “I” and “we” in the NAB in Rom and found that the number of “I’s” exceeded “we’s” 118 to 88. Then it seemed the question came to how this usage compares with Paul’s usage in his other letters. Soon it became clear that a more detailed study was necessary. This memorandum explains the methodology I followed to arrive at the final number, describes the results, some implications, and areas for fuller study.

Methodology

One of the hurdles I faced in determining the total number of times Paul used the first person singular and first person plural pronouns in his letters was the flexibility

Greek gives to use verbal forms to express subjects of sentences rather than expressing the subject directly. The obvious way to find the subject of all the verbs was to proceed to parse each verb in the Greek versions. In the interest of time, I chose another path: to rely on the NAB to state correctly the person and number of the subject of each verb. While a major assumption, I did also pay attention in later stages of the data collection to make sure that this assumption was not easily demonstrably wrong. Another key assumption throughout this study was the accuracy of the computer based Bible Works (“BW”) to identify words and forms.

On the assumption that using the NAB would be an accurate way to determine the subjects of the verbs, I searched through each of the undisputed letters for “I” and “we” using BW. In Romans, this resulted in a total number of 88 “we’s” and 118 “I’s.” This count needed to be adjusted for Paul’s use of the “editorial” or “authorial” “we,” as a rhetorically sensitive locution to express the first person singular, “I.” For example, in Romans 3:8, the NAB includes three “we’s” all of which clearly refer to Paul alone: “And why not say -- as *we* are accused and as some claim *we* say -- that *we* should do evil that good may come of it?” (NAB). As my goal was to determine the relative use of first person singular and true first person plural pronouns, an accurate representation required that these “editorial we’s” be identified, subtracted from the total “we’s” and added to the number of “I’s.” In Romans, this was found to occur 11 times. (This same problem also occurs with “us” and “our” but was addressed differently.)

Within the quotations Paul uses throughout his letters, the first person pronouns also appear. Thus in Romans 9:25 Paul quotes (loosely) Hosea 2:23 “As indeed he says in

Hosea: "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved'" (NAB). In Romans, "I" occurs 12 times within quotations and "we" once. Both were subtracted from the previous total.

Then I did a search using the Bible Works LXX/NT Morphology version ("BGM") searching on ἐγώ. This search should return every instance in which the first person pronoun occurs, in every case and in both the singular and the plural. Each verse identified was studied and the results put into one of a number of categories:

"I" or "we" expressed Since the subject of sentences had been enumerated through the count of the NAB, the appearances of ἐγώ or ἡμεῖς were not included in the final counts to avoid duplication of the count. In Romans, ἐγώ appears 11 times, and ἡμεῖς twice.

Enumeration and categorization of remaining pronouns My goal was to count the number of times a singular or plural pronoun occurred. But, just as a first person plural nominative pronoun can be an "editorial we," signifying a singular subject, so there can be an "editorial our" or "us." For my purposes, these should be included in the first person singular category. The judgment as to when this is an editorial or an everyday use of the pronoun is context driven. Paul, for example, was not above shifting from the first to the second person within the same sentence while signifying himself. In the enumerations, I attempted to classify these when making a close decision adverse to my thesis. In the case of Romans, therefore, my predilection was to consider them as "editorial we's" while with the other letters I would do the opposite. Not knowing the extent of the use of editorial "us/our" when I started, I did not classify them separately but included them in the "me/my" category directly as I went.

Without doubt, I found 2 Corinthians the most difficult letter to work with because of the extensive use of the editorial pronouns. Of the 127 "we's" identified in this letter, I classified 87, more than two-thirds, as editorial. In Galatians and 1 Corinthians, in contrast, 7 of 24 and 23 of 69 (respectively), or about one-third, are editorial. While, as I admit, I did not preserve the statistics for the plural genitive, dative,

and accusative plural pronouns as I did for the nominative, my impression is that the same proportion exists for these as for the nominative.

Presentation of Results

The pronouns were thus put into a number of categories. For Romans, the categories were as follows:

Table 6
Singular and Plural First Person Pronouns: Romans

"We" from NAB	88	"I" from NAB	118
Editorial "we's"	(11)	"Editorial "we's"	11
"We" in quotes	(1)	"I" in quotes	(12)
"Our," "us"*	<u>49</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>59</u>
Total	125	Total	176
Ratio: singular to plural	1.41		

*Includes moving editorial plurals to singulars.

This procedure was then repeated for each of the other six undisputed Pauline letters. The results are tabulated at the end of this memo.

Because of the differing length of the letters, the absolute numbers of single and plural pronouns are not particularly meaningful statistics. I believe that the ratio of the two, showing the disposition of the apostle to establish a common identity with his audience relative to the establishment of his own personality, is the more indicative statistic. This ratio is shown for each of the seven undisputed letters.

Table 7
Ratio of First Person Singular to Plural Pronouns

Romans	1.41
Other Letters:	
1 Cor	3.63
2 Cor	4.93
Gal	3.47
Phil	20.83
1 Thes	2.96
Phlmn	NM*
Total Other Letters	4.53

*Phlmn has no occurrences of first person plural pronouns.

Results were overwhelmingly in favor of my thesis. The Romans' "I" to "we" ratio is less than half the next lowest ratio (1 Thes) and less than one-third that for the combined letters to the Corinthians and Galatians.

The contrast could be even greater. In enumerating the number of singulars in Romans, the 176 instances of the use of first person singular includes the uses of "I" in the "I am a sinner" section of Romans 7:7-25. This section of 19 verses (roughly 5 percent of the text of Romans) includes 27 of Romans' 176 first singular pronouns (15 percent). In ch. 4, I address the question as to the identity of this "I," and conclude that the interlocutor in 7:7-25 is the same as the interlocutor of Rom 2. If these "I's" are attributed to someone other than Paul, and instead categorized as a quotation, the ratio of single to plural first person pronouns drops from 1.41 to 1.19.

Relative Use of 2nd Person Pronoun

Another way to demonstrate Paul's use of common language is to compare the use of *second* person plural pronouns with *first* person plurals: you (all) versus we/us. As with arriving at a count of the first person pronouns, the Greek speaker's ability to omit

the subject of a verb when it would otherwise be a pronoun, makes it too time consuming to use Greek to arrive at the number of times the second person nominative pronoun is used, either expressly or in the verb. As with the first person pronouns, therefore, I used the search function in BW to find all of the uses of “you” in the NAB. It is inevitable that even though I was more interested in the relative use of the second person plural pronoun, this search routine returned the number of times a Greek second person plural *or* singular appears in the NAB version of the letters. We must consider that even if Paul were to use the 2nd person singular pronoun, it may be used to refer to the whole of the congregation as a collective body. To refine the methodology, however, I decided was not worth it.

The table below shows the results for the search.

Table 8		
Use of Second Person and First Person Plural Pronouns		
	<u>Use of “You”</u>	<u>You/We</u>
Romans	241	1.93
Other Letters:		
1 Cor	279	3.49
2 Cor	222	3.18
Gal	102	3.40
Phil	76	12.67
1 Thes	102	4.25
Phlm	<u>34</u>	<u>NM</u>
Total Other Letters	815	3.88

According to the NAB, “you” appears 241 times in Romans. In our earlier discussion, we saw that Paul uses a first person plural pronoun (“we” “us”) 125 times. That results in a ratio of “you” to “we/us” of 1.93 to 1. This same methodology applied to the other letters shows the ratio ranges from a low of 3.18 to 1 to a high of 12.67 to 1. The overall average of the ratio for the other letters comes to 3.88 to 1, almost exactly

twice as high as for Romans. One listening to the letters, therefore, would have a relatively greater sense of Paul identifying with the audience of Romans than with the other letters.

Implications of Results

I believe the results show an overwhelming difference between the language Paul uses in Romans as compared with the other letters. While the methodology used may be judged somewhat imperfect, there is no bias towards any particular result in it. The differences in the ratios are simply too great and the relative preference for “we” over “I” and “we” over “you” in Rom highlights Paul’s effort to align himself with the audience as having common interests, theologies, and presuppositions. Rather than setting himself apart in an “I” “you” relationship Paul is expressing solidarity with the audience. The comparison of “you” to “we” confirms this same conclusion. Paul is much more likely in Rom, in comparison with his other letters, to address the audience as “us” than as “you.” All the letters are meant to persuade the audience to take certain actions; in Romans Paul’s grammatical choices work to lead the audience to conclude that “Paul’s teachings are *our* teachings.” The audience members are much more likely to sense that they and Paul share the same religious identity and arrive at the same conclusions.⁶⁰⁸

For my work, I see again that Paul’s writing style to the Romans is different than in the letters to the congregations he formed in the East. I submit that this is part of Paul’s

⁶⁰⁸ Apart from the implications for Romans, Paul’s extraordinary use of the editorial second person plural in 2 Corinthians study suggests that there is something different going on in that letter than in the other letters. The letter as we have it is sometimes considered to be a composite of two or three other letters, but the editorial we’s are spread fairly evenly across the letter, suggesting that in this regard one style is being employed.

strategy to identify closely with this “unknown” community of Jesus followers. He uses “we” to truly include the congregation and (contrary to 2 Corinthians) not to write imperiously to them. In Romans, Abraham is *our* ancestor (4:1), while in 2 Corinthians “as *you* have come to understand *us* partially, that *we* are *your* boast . . .” (1:14).

Table 9
Paul's Use of Pronouns by Letter

Romans			
"We" from NAB	88	"I" from NAB	118
Editorial "we's"	(11)	"Editorial "we's"	11
"We" in quotes	(1)	"I" in quotes	(12)
"Our," "us"*	<u>49</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>59</u>
Total	125	Total	176
Ratio: singular to plural	1.41		
Use of "you:"	241		
Ratio: You/We	1.93		
1 Corinthians			
"We" from NAB	70	"I" from NAB	208
Editorial "we's"	(23)	"Editorial "we's"	23
"We" in quotes	(1)	"I" in quotes	(6)
"Our," "us"*	<u>34</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>53</u>
Total	80	Total	278
Ratio: singular to plural	3.48		
Use of "you:"	279		
Ratio: You/We	3.49		
2 Corinthians			
"We" from NAB	128	"I" from NAB	167
Editorial "we's"	(87)	"Editorial "we's"	87
"We" in quotes	0	"I" in quotes	(3)
"Our," "us"*	<u>29</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>94</u>
Total	70	Total	345
Ratio: singular to plural	4.93		
Use of "you:"	222		
Ratio: You /We	3.17		

Galatians

"We" from NAB	24	"I" from NAB	70
Editorial "we's"	(7)	"Editorial "we's"	7
"We" in quotes	(0)	"I" in quotes	(0)
"Our," "us"*	<u>13</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>27</u>
Total	30	Total	104
Ratio: singular to plural	3.47		
Use of "you:"	102		
Ratio: You/We	3.40		

Philippians

"We" from NAB	4	"I" from NAB	79
Editorial "we's"	(1)	"Editorial "we's"	1
"We" in quotes	(0)	"I" in quotes	(0)
"Our," "us"*	<u>3</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>45</u>
Total	6	Total	125
Ratio: singular to plural	20.83		
Use of "you:"	76		
Ratio: You/We	12.67		

1 Thessalonians

"We" from NAB	50	"I" from NAB	4
Editorial "we's"	(41)	"Editorial "we's"	41
"We" in quotes	(0)	"I" in quotes	(0)
"Our," "us"*	<u>15</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>26</u>
Total	24	Total	71
Ratio: singular to plural	2.96		
Use of "you:"	102		
Ratio: You/We	4.25		

Philemon

"We" from NAB	0	"I" from NAB	18
Editorial "we's"	(0)	"Editorial "we's"	0
"We" in quotes	(0)	"I" in quotes	(0)
"Our," "us"*	<u>0</u>	"Me," "my"*	<u>10</u>
Total	0	Total	28
Ratio: singular to plural	NM		
Use of "you:"	34		
Ratio: You/We	NM		

*Includes moving editorial plurals to singulars.

APPENDIX B: TRANSLATION OF ROMANS 4:1

In ch. 3 I introduced my translation for the question presented in Rom 4:1. While my punctuation and translation decisions build on the recent work of a number of scholars, the resulting translation is, to my knowledge, without precedent.⁶⁰⁹ In developing a translation, the first decision to be made is the relationship with the preceding verses, in order to identify the person who raises the question in the first place. We have seen that 3:29-31 establishes, first, that Jews and non-Jews are made righteous by the same, one God in relation to faithfulness, and, second, that Paul asserts that this faithfulness substantiates the Law. It is logical that the question of the relation of Abraham and his faithfulness be raised by the interlocutor rather than Paul.⁶¹⁰

I translate the interrogative $\tau\acute{\iota}$ as “why” rather than “what.” While either translation may be justified in the abstract, “why” fits the context better than “what.” The Louw-Nida lexicon comments on $\tau\acute{\iota}$: “an interrogative reference to reason – ‘why,’ ‘for what reason’.”⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁹ The in text footnote summarizes the range of current translation options.

⁶¹⁰ Contra Thorsteinsson but with Jewett and Stowers. Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography* (Con:BNT; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 2003), 146. Jewett, *Romans*, 307. Stowers, *Rereading*, 234. Hays believes the question is posed by Paul, giving voice to a false inference *against which* Paul is arguing. Hays, “Rom 4:1,” 87.

⁶¹¹ L&N, “ $\tau\acute{\iota}$,” 92.15.

The next issue is the status of the phrase τί [οὖν] ἐροῦμεν. Hays remarks that of the other six times the phrase appears in Romans in only one case, at 8:31, does the phrase not constitute a complete sentence that introduces a rhetorical question with (in four of six cases) a false inference.⁶¹² Hays then concludes that the phrase constitutes a complete sentence introducing a rhetorical question that, probably, has a negative inference.

I would point out, first, that the four cases with a negative inference (3:5, 6:1, 7:7, and 9:14) are all followed by the Pauline expression μὴ γένοιτο. That is not the case with 4:1, no matter how the verse is punctuated. The other two questions (8:31 and 9:30) do not have a negative inference and are not followed by μὴ γένοιτο. Further, it is of note that 8:31 is the instance when Hays agrees that the phrase is part of a sentence that we would translate as “what do we say about these things?” In the case of 9:30, NA²⁷, Hays, and apparently everyone else place a question mark after the phrase, dividing the question from the *real* question, that I paraphrase: Why is it that non-Judean non-Jews who did not strive for righteousness attained it, but Israel, pursuing righteousness through the law, did not? I punctuate and translate 9:30-31 as follows:

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντα δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν
δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως, Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον
δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν;

Why then do we say that non-Jews, not pursuing righteousness, attained righteousness, a righteousness from faithfulness, but Israel pursuing the law of righteousness did not achieve [righteousness] through law?

⁶¹² Hays, “Rom 4:1,” 77-78.

Moving the question mark from immediately after ἔροῦμεν to the end of the full sentence means that what is marked as a subordinate clause by ὅτι is not turned into an inchoate sentence. Hays cites a parallel to Rom 9:30 at 1 Cor 10:19, Τί οὖν φημι that is followed by a rhetorical question with a positive inference. Indeed, NA²⁷ ends the phrase with a question mark and has a fragmentary sentence again introduced by ὅτι. My argument stands: removing the question mark makes the verse more intelligible.

A seemingly insuperable problem with my punctuation and reading is Hays' observation that the rhetorical questions posed after Τί οὖν ἔροῦμεν are all answered positively. Surely the question in 4:1 "[Did we achieve this status] through human efforts?" must receive a negative response. In fact, if the interlocutor is a Judean Jew, whether Jesus follower or not, then in one sense the interlocutor does find Abraham a forefather according to human effort. The fact that Paul does not respond with a forceful μὴ γένοιτο suggests that Paul recognizes that the question is fair, needing to be addressed carefully. By this logic, *all* the instances cited by Hays when the phrase "Τί οὖν ἔροῦμεν" is not followed by rhetorical question with a negative inference, can be translated as the introduction to a single longer question that does not require a negative response.

Following this logic, the subject of "ἔροῦμεν" can easily be the subject of the infinitive "εὐρηκέναι," and "Ἀβραάμ" its object, making it a smoothly flowing "Why do we say that we have found Abraham our forefather?"⁶¹³

⁶¹³ Hays' translation is not far from this: "What then shall we say? Have we found Abraham (to be) our forefather according to the flesh?" Hays, "Rom 4:1," 80. Hays and I disagree with the inference as to whether the question is answered in the affirmative or negative.

There is left to consider the concluding prepositional phrase “κατὰ σάρκα.”

While all commentators show how their reading ties chs. 3 and 4 together, Stowers and Hays, whose translations are closest to mine, perceptively direct attention to the context provided by the preceding verses, though they draw slightly differing conclusions therefrom. Hays reads Rom 4 as an explication of the reason why Paul claims in 3:31 that his gospel affirms the Law and does not nullify it. For Hays, ch. 4 is an exegesis of Gen confirming that the Law provides that Jews are made righteous by faith, not by Law.⁶¹⁴ Then “κατὰ σάρκα” is a question with a negative inference, for all, Jews and non-Jews are made righteous by faith, and Abraham is the exemplar of this.

Stowers points to the discussion in 3:27-28 on “faithfulness versus works of the Law” as the context for Rom 4. Then κατὰ σάρκα refers to human effort, in this instance a near homonym for “works of the law” and the issue becomes whether Abraham became the father of Jews and non-Jews through his works or through faithfulness.⁶¹⁵

My reading is that the question “Why do we say that we have found Abraham our father according to the flesh?” is raised by the interlocutor, a non-Judean non-Jew, wondering how it could be that Abraham could be the forefather of him and his like. In Gal, Paul has declared Abraham to be the forefather, the exemplar, for just these people. How could this be? It is in other words, a question of the status of nations in Abraham that is being raised here.

⁶¹⁴ Hays, “Rom 4:1,” 88.

⁶¹⁵ Stowers, *Rereading*.

APPENDIX C: TRANSLATION OF ROMANS 7:1-6

Romans 7 is a complicated argument requiring careful attention to the language and rhetorical figures Paul uses. As a start to a proper reading of this section, I will provide a close, extended exegesis of the first six verses in the chapter. Just as I showed the importance of a proper understanding of Rom 1:1-5 for locating the letter's audience, so these first six verses set the context for understanding the whole of the chapter.

The first six verses of ch. 7 introduce the subject of the Law in a way that Paul would be justified to think would capture his audience's attention. The NRSV translates the passage as follows:

¹Do you not know, brothers and sisters-- for I am speaking to those who know the law-- that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? ² Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. ³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. ⁴ In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

The first verse introduces the subject of the Law and the audience in Rome at one and the same time. The reference to "those who know the Law" apparently refers to Jews (whether Judean or not) who know the Torah. On the other hand, since Paul is discussing

marriage laws, the reference could be to the highly developed Roman laws regulating marriage.

In the second verse, the provisions of the Law come into consideration. The NRSV asserts that a widow is under no further legal obligations under marriage laws. While largely true, the translation ignores provisions in both Roman and Jewish marriage laws that constrain the widow. Under Roman law she was, first, forbidden to marry for a 10 month mourning period and was then required to remarry within the next 8 months.⁶¹⁶ Under Jewish law, a childless widow must be prepared to marry her brother-in-law (Deut 25:5-10), though the commandment is expressed as an obligation of the surviving brother to marry her.

Assuming that Paul was aware of the general shape of marriage laws in Rome, how are we to understand the phrase in 7:2b: the widow “is discharged from the Law concerning the husband”? After all, she is still covered by the same set of rules that applied during her marriage. Those who read Rom through Gal see this as a perfectly reasonable translation. See, for example, Gal 3:11: “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the Law; for ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith’” (NRSV). Within the context of Gal 3:11, a statement by Paul that the Law does not apply seems to be a perfectly reasonable way to read Rom 7:3.

The criticisms to this reading are, first (as we have seen) that the statement is factually not true. The widow continues to be under the marriage and adultery laws of Rome (just as she was when her husband was alive) as well as the Torah of Judaism.

⁶¹⁶ Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 493- 94.

Second, as Mark Nanos has pointed out, Paul surely did not mean that Jesus followers were free from Torah, with its commandments, histories of origins (including Adam, referenced in Rom 5, and Abraham, in Rom 4) and, most importantly, the basic creedal statement of monotheistic Judaism, the *shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4: “Take to heart, Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is one.”⁶¹⁷

Furthermore, as we have seen earlier, in Rom Paul is not addressing the subjects of Gal in the same way, but taking a more nuanced, circumspect view. In Rom Paul is careful to (at a minimum) rephrase statements in Gal that may be taken to be insulting to Jews. In Rom 6, Paul largely ignores the Law in the question of ethics. If ch. 7 represents a complete rejection of Torah, it seems counterproductive to this mission.

One key to an understanding that honors these objections lies in the translation of the preposition ἀπὸ, rendered by the NRSV and essentially every commentator as “from.”⁶¹⁸ In this reading, ἀπὸ is taken with the connotation of a separation from the Law. On the contrary, I suggest the phrase ἀπὸ νόμου implies that *because of* the Law, the woman is no longer responsible to her husband: *by the Law* she is freed from him. That is, while other translators take ἀπὸ as *separating from* the Law, I see ἀπὸ as describing the *source from which* the woman’s freedom is obtained. This usage of ἀπὸ is consistent with other Pauline usage.

⁶¹⁷ Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 8.

⁶¹⁸ Byrne, *Romans*, 208. Dunn, *Romans*, 1.360-61. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 454. Jewett, *Romans*, 431.

Paul's Use of Ἀπὸ to Denote Origin

While using the preposition Ἀπὸ to speak of “separation from” is this preposition’s most common use, Paul also uses it to speak of the “origin of” an action or a state. This is illustrated in Paul’s use of the preposition first in his introductory formulae, and also in his discussion in Rom 9:3. In his introductory formulae, Paul regularly writes of peace and grace as coming, Ἀπὸ, *from*, God our father (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; Philm 3). In this formulation, God is the source of the grace and peace that Paul invokes for his audience. Here, Paul uses the preposition Ἀπὸ to mark grace’s origin.

The next, less obvious, use of Ἀπὸ as source, origin, or means comes from Rom 9:3. The NRSV, following the standard scholarship, translates the verse “For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off *from* [Ἀπὸ] Christ for the sake of my own people,” In Rom 9, Paul reflects on the position of those Jews who do not accept the fact that with Jesus’ raising from the dead a new era has come. First Paul wants to express just how much he loves them. In verse 3, he expresses this love in dramatic language, declaring that if it would do any good he would suffer obliteration, destruction—like the destruction of the Canaanite cities when the Hebrew people entered their Promised Land—for the sake of the Israelites.

The NRSV translates ἀνάθεμα as “accursed and cut off.” With Ἀπὸ translated as “from,” the connotation is that Paul would accept being separated from Christ if that

would lead to the salvation of Israel.⁶¹⁹ From this translation, I come away with the image of the scapegoat being sent out into the wilderness carrying the sins of the people with it.

In the Septuagint, ἀνάθεμα is used when translating the Hebrew חָרַם. N.

Lohfink found the verbal form of חָרַם to have three related senses: in the hiphil, “to consecrate something or someone as a permanent and definitive offering for the sanctuary; in war to consecrate a city and its inhabitants to destruction; carry out the destruction.”⁶²⁰ The hophal follows from the sense of destruction to usually mean capital punishment.⁶²¹ The nominal form follows from these meanings to apply to the object or person so consecrated or condemned to death.⁶²²

The Greek ἀνάθεμα generally carries the sense of the consecration of an object to the divine, the first sense of the Hebrew.⁶²³ In the Septuagint, it appears 13 times in the book of Joshua to describe the required destruction of the Canaanite cities and people by the Hebrew people. In the New Testament, ἀνάθεμα appears besides this one use in Rom, in 1 Cor, Gal, and Acts, always in pejorative reference: to be visited upon those seeking Paul’s death (Acts 23:14), upon opponents of the Lord (1 Cor 12:3; 16:22), or upon Paul’s opponents (Gal 1:8-9). In these it carries the connotation of something “cursed and destroyed,” not “banished or exiled.” Jewett cites the parallel between Paul’s

⁶¹⁹ Harris, *Prepositions*, 60-61.

⁶²⁰ N. Lohfink, “חָרַם” *TDOT*, V.186.

⁶²¹ N. Lohfink, “חָרַם” *TDOT*, V.186.

⁶²² N. Lohfink, “חָרַם” *TDOT*, V.186.

⁶²³ Johannes Behm, “ἀνατίθημι” κτλ., *TDNT*: 1.353-56.

prayer here and Moses' prayer in Exod 32:31-33 that he be blotted from the LORD'S book if the LORD will not forgive the idolaters.⁶²⁴ Jewett goes on to argue that his translation, "banned from," expresses this same blotting from the book of life as Moses' own offer, and finds the phrase in parallel with that of 8:39, that "nothing will separate us from the love of Christ."⁶²⁵

The clear meaning of the Exodus citation, however, is that Moses, like Paul, would be willing to be destroyed rather than live without the people he loves. Hence, for all of these reasons, I believe that the proper translation of ἀναθέμα must have the sense of "destruction."

The translation of ἀναθέμα is the first part of my analysis. It is also important to consider explicitly the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ χριστοῦ, essentially always translated "from Christ." Lexicons emphasize that the first sense of ἀπό is in separation, distancing from.⁶²⁶ As in the Pauline salutations, however, ἀπό also may have the denotation of "origin." As in English, "from" can take on many meanings, e.g., birth place (as "I am from Denver"), or, of import here, "of the Person *from* whom an act comes, i.e., *by* whom it is done . . ."⁶²⁷ If then Paul has prayed to be cursed *by* Christ, the implied parallel with Moses is completed: as Moses asked the LORD to blot him from the LORD'S book, so Paul asks that he be destroyed *by* Christ on behalf of his brothers and

⁶²⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 560-61.

⁶²⁵ Jewett, *Romans*, 560-61.

⁶²⁶ "ἀπό" LSJ 94. "ἀπό" BDAG, 105.

⁶²⁷ "ἀπό" LSJ 94, definition III.4. See BDAG, 5.e, 107.

sisters. Verse 9:3 would then read “For I could wish that I myself were *cursed and destroyed by Christ* for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.”

This reading of 9:3 also helps to preserve continuity with ch. 8. First of all, we might note that in 8:35 and 39, Paul constructs parallel phrases: “who will separate us from the love of Christ” (τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ) (Rom 8:35) and “[nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God . . .” (οὔτε τις κτίσις ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ) (Rom 8:39). Were Paul to wish to emphasize “distancing from Christ” in 9:3, the most effective way would have been to reduplicate the “separating” phrasing from ch. 8. But in 9:3 Paul avoids the verb χωρίζω, in favor of ἀνάθεμα εἶναι. My translation does preserve a Pauline parallel between 8:32a and 9:3. In the former verse, Paul relates how “God did not spare [ἐφείσατο] his son from destruction but handed him over for the sake of us all.” Paul uses the verb φείδομαι, for which LSJ gives a first definition of “to spare persons and things in war, i.e., not destroy them. . . .”⁶²⁸ Paul provides the parallel sentiment in 9:3: as God did not spare Christ from destruction for the sake of all, so Paul is willing to be *destroyed by Christ* (ἀνάθεμα εἶναι . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) for the sake of his kinsmen. For this to work, the preposition ἀπὸ must take on the connotation of the source of Paul’s destruction, to be customarily translated with a sense of agency on the part of Christ.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁸ “φείδομαι” LSJ, 856.

⁶²⁹ Two texts, Bezae from the 5th century and G from the 9th read ὑπό rather than ἀπὸ; the former is the more common means of denoting agency with a passive verb.

In his study of the uses of prepositions in the NT, Murray Harris quotes E. Jannaris depicting “a struggle among ὑπό, ἀπό, παρά, and ἐξ, which resulted in the retreat and final disappearance, one after another, or ὑπό, παρά, and ἐξ, before the victorious ἀπό.”⁶³⁰ Harris cites 1 Cor 1:30, James 1:13, and 2 Pet 1:21 as instances of the use of ἀπό Θεοῦ to define God as the source of an action, using ἀπὸ in a manner completely analogous to that I propose for Rom 7:1-3.

Resulting Translation of 7:1-3

With these examples in mind, we look again at Rom 7:2 and 7:3, now with confidence that in the phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου Paul is claiming that the law is the source of the widow’s freedom from her husband. I translate 7:1-3 as follows (with the Greek immediately below):

¹Do you not know, brothers, for I speak to ones knowing the Law, that the Law rules over a human as long as the human lives? ² So a married woman is bound under the Law to a living husband; but if the husband should die, she is released by the Law in respect to her husband. [Of course, since she is still alive, the Law continues to rule over her.] ³In accordance with the Law, she will be called “adulteress” if, while her husband is alive, she becomes another man’s; but if the husband dies, she is free, under the terms of the Law, to become another’s and not be an adulteress.

¹Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμου λαλῶ, ὅτι ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ’ ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ; ²ἢ γὰρ ὕπανδρος γυνή τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδεταί νόμῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός. ³Ἄρα οὖν ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός μοιχαλὶς χρηματίζει ἐὰν γένηται ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ.

⁶³⁰ Harris, *Prepositions*, 58. is quoting A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar (Chiefly of the Attic Dialect) as Written and Spoken from Classical Antiquity down to the Present Time* (London: Macmillan, 1897), §1628.

This provides a coherent reading of the opening to ch. 7 and provides a fresh starting point for reading the rest of the chapter. Paul does not see the woman as in any sense liberated “from the Law” but liberated “by the Law” so as to be able to remarry. In that context, “Law” takes on a positive role in the life of a married couple.

Translation of 7:4-6

In vv. 4-6, Paul describes how the analogy applies to Jesus followers. The NRSV and, with exceptions, most commentators translate 7:4a ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἑθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ: “in the same way, my friends, you have died to the Law through the body of Christ” (NRSV). As we have seen, this seems to echo the sentiments in ch. 6, where death of the Jesus follower with Christ results in the living to righteousness. There are, however, important differences.

The first critical interpretation is in the translation of ἑθανατώθητε, aorist passive from θανατόω. In the passive, this verb is usually translated “put to death” or “killed.”⁶³¹ The NRSV translates the dative τῷ νόμῳ as a dative of respect, “you have died [with respect] to the law,” a translation decision shared by major commentators.⁶³² As we have seen, however, in vv. 7:1-3 the law is active, liberating the widow. When translating this verse, then, I wish to preserve the sense of the law working in the life of the Jesus followers. In this light, I translate the dative τῷ νόμῳ as an instrumental dative

⁶³¹ “θανατόω” LSJ, 784. Among commentators, Fitzmyer follows the NRSV in translating ἑθανατώθητε in a stative manner: “you . . . have died . . .” Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 454.

⁶³² Thus Jewett, “. . . you also were put to death with respect to the law . . .” Jewett, *Romans*, 428. So too Byrne, *Romans*, 208; Cranfield, *Romans*, 331; Dunn, *Romans*, 358. BDAG translates as a dative of disadvantage. BDAG, “θανατόω,” 444.

rather than a dative of respect, rendering 7:4a: “In the same ways, brothers, you have been slain by means of the law through the body of Christ.” Use of the instrumental dative here follows its use in 7:2, “. . . γυνὴ . . . δέδεταί νόμῳ” and constructs a parallelism: in 7:2 the wife is bound by the law; in 7:4 the Jesus follower is slain by the law.

The credibility of this reading is supported by further syntactical analysis.

Herbert W. Smyth describes the instrumental dative:

The Greek dative, as the representative of the lost instrumental case, denotes that *by which* or *with which* an action is done or accompanied. It is of two kinds: (1) the instrumental dative proper; (2) the comitative dative.

When the idea denoted by the noun in the dative is the *instrument* or *means*, it falls under (1); if it is a person (not regarded as the instrument or means) or any other living being or a thing regarded as a person it belongs under (2); . . .

Abstract substantives with or without an attributive often stand in the instrumental dative instead of the cognate accusative.⁶³³

Daniel Wallace describes the “dative of means/instrument:”

“The dative substantive is used to indicate the means or instrument by which the verbal action is accomplished. This is a very common use of the dative embracing as it does one of the root ideas of the dative case (viz., instrumentality). . . .

The dative noun is typically concrete, as opposed to manner, where the noun is typically abstract. The noun in the dative is conceived of as impersonal. It is not necessarily so, however. But it is distinguished from personal agency in two ways: (1) personality is not in view, and (2) means involves an agent who uses it (whether that agent is stated or implied).⁶³⁴

To a 21st century mind, “law” is not usually considered “concrete,” but “abstract.”

Whether that would be true for Paul, who as we saw evidences a belief that the law exerts liberating power, we cannot say for sure. At a minimum, our understanding would then

⁶³³ Smyth, *Grammar*, 346.

⁶³⁴ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervans, 1996), 162.

rest on Wallace’s use of the term “typical:” within the New Testament, this may not be a typical use of the term but it would easily be comprehended by the Roman audience to whom the letter is addressed. Indeed, one of the examples Wallace cites is from Rom. 3:28: λογίζομεθα γὰρ δικαιούσθαι **πίστει** ἄνθρωπον . . . “For we reckon that a person is justified [passive voice] **through faithfulness** . . .” (emphasis in original).⁶³⁵ Wallace classifies πίστει as an instrumental dative though it, like νόμῳ, is not now considered concrete. Both nouns, however, are conceived of as impersonal and a divine agent may be implied in both divine passive verbs.⁶³⁶

The widespread choice to translate τῷ νόμῳ as a dative of respect rather than an instrumental dative, therefore, cannot be supported simply on syntactical or contextual grounds but on the basis of theological presuppositions. If one translates this passage with the assumption that Paul’s “law-free gospel” means that Jesus followers no longer have any relation to the Jewish Law, then the introductory verses speak of a “separation from” the Law and not “separation by” the Law, and the dative here is used to confirm that interpretation: Jesus followers have been killed/have died with respect to the Law.

In contrast, my translation decisions reflect a conclusion that Paul is here addressing the role of the Law in the lives of an audience who are disposed to think of the Law as an active positive force in their lives. In their case, the Law provided that, as they

⁶³⁵ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 163. In the discussion of the “dative of cause,” BDF cites Rom. 11:20: τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν: “they were broken off because of unbelief.” BDF §196, 105.

⁶³⁶ Romans 8:14 contains another phrase usually translated as an instrumental dative: ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται . . . : “For those who are led by the Spirit of God . . .” (NAB, NRSV).

have died through the body of Christ, they are now free to belong to another, namely the one raised from the dead (7:4b).

In Rom 6, Paul uses the verb ἀποθνήσκω, an intransitive verb that may be used for the passive of ἀποκτείνω. Paul's use in 7:4 of θανατόω in the passive with νόμος as a dative of means completes the thought: led by the Law you have been killed through the death of the body of Christ to a new life as slaves of God for whom the Jesus follower will bear fruit.

Translators of 7:5 generally translate the clause τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν, “the passions of sin through the law work in our members.”⁶³⁷ Although the first definition of πάθημα in LSJ is that which befalls one, suffering, misfortune, with the connotation of consequences of actions, and the translation of the same term in Rom 8:18 has this sense, nonetheless there is a certain logic to translating παθήματα “passions.”⁶³⁸ Tobin translates the phrase “sinful passions,” and suggests a parallel with the phrase ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, “in its desires” in 6:12 and with a similar phrase σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις at Gal 5:24.⁶³⁹ Within the context of Rom 7, an interlocutor later describes how he did not “covet” until the law forbade covetousness (7:7). In that section, however, Paul does not use παθήματα

⁶³⁷ So the NAB, NRSV, Jewett, *Romans*, 428. Supporting my decision, in his translation of Rom in *Paul and the Torah*, Lloyd Gaston translates 7:5 “For when we were [living] in the flesh, Sin’s sad consequences which are through the law were active in our members to bear fruit for death.” Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 175.

⁶³⁸ “παθαίνω,” LSJ, 1285. So too BDAG, “that which is suffered, or endured, *suffering, misfortune*.” “πάθημα, ατος, το” BDAG, 747.

⁶³⁹ Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 223.

to describe covetousness, but ἐπιθυμία. Elsewhere in his letters, Paul restricts the use of παθήματα to the context of the “sufferings of Jesus Christ” (Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 1:5, 6, 7; Phil 3:10), and it is in that same context that he uses παθήματα in Gal. That is also the meaning attributed to παθήμα when in the plural by LSJ: “incidents, happenings (and in medical use “troubles, symptoms”).⁶⁴⁰ As a consequence, while “sufferings of [i.e., from] sins” is not the most felicitous phrase, the same sense can be gained from the translation as “consequences of sin.”

When one views sin and the Law as forces acting throughout the universe, one prefers to translate παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν as “consequences of sins.” Paul in 7:5 is saying that even before anyone *knows* the Law, sin works through the Law to invade and degrade the members of the body.⁶⁴¹ This is exactly the same point that Paul makes in ch. 1 in describing the impact of idolatry on the lives of non-Jews. I then translate 7:5 as “When we were in the flesh, the consequences of sin worked through the Law in our members, in order to bear fruit for death.”

In v. 6, I translate κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου again with a sense that the law is causing “us” to be discharged, once and for all, from our previous condition: “we are discharged by the Law” In the participial phrase, ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, [we] “dying in which/whom we were restrained,” one must decide the referent for the relative pronoun, ᾧ. While νόμου is the nearest antecedent, in my

⁶⁴⁰ “παθαίνω,” LSJ, 1285.

⁶⁴¹ Nothing Paul says here or elsewhere in Romans restricts the meaning of “body” to individuals. It is very likely that Paul understands the degradation to occur in nations and tribes just as much as in individuals.

opinion the more reasonable referent is death, θανάτῳ, from the previous verse and the participle itself. This seems to make the most sense of the sentence within Paul's argument. Then the participial phrase is translated "we, having died in which death we used to be held fast. . ."

The closing phrase, ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος, "in a new age of spirit and not in an old age of word," is a reference to the argument on the Spirit contained in ch. 8. Paul makes reference elsewhere to the spirit/word antithesis.

Final Translation of Rom 7:1-6

These decisions lead to the following translation of the entirety of Rom 7:1-6.

¹Do you not know, brothers, for I speak to ones knowing the Law, that the Law rules over a human as long as the human lives? ²So a married woman has been bound by the Law to a living husband; but if the husband should die, she has been released by the Law from her husband. ³In accordance with the Law, she will be called "adulteress" if, while her husband would live, she becomes another man's; but if the husband would die, she is free, under the terms of the Law, to become another man's and not be an adulteress. ⁴So also, my brothers, you were slain by the Law through the body of Christ so you became another's, the one raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were in the flesh, the consequences of sins were working in our limbs through the Law in order to bear fruit to death. ⁶Now we, having died in which death we used to be held fast, are discharged by the Law so we might serve in a new age of the spirit and not in an old age of words.